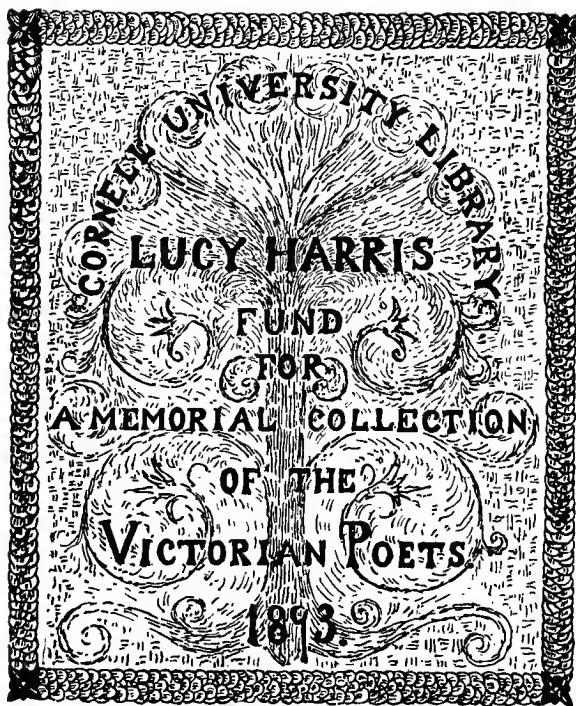






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Swinburne's Atalanta in Calydon and Erechtheus

With Notes by Marion Clyde Wier, Ph. D. of the
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By

Algea Non CHARLES SWINBURNE

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INTRODUCTION

This edition of *Atalanta in Calydon* and *Erechtheus* was designed for those students and teachers who are interested in Swinburne's fondness for Greek literature. No attempt has been made to express a critical judgment as to his place among the English poets; enough has been said and written on that subject to satisfy even the most censorious. Nor is there the slightest desire on the part of the editor to imply that Swinburne was a plagiarist when he made use of the available Greek material that suited his purpose. Those who know Greek tragedy realize that his work is superior to all but the very best in that field. It is hoped that those who have not covered the field may get from these pages some information not to be found in the usual sources.

THE ARGUMENT

ALTHÆA, daughter of Thestius and Eurythemis, queen of Calydon, being with child of Meleager her first-born son, dreamed that she brought forth a brand burning; and upon his birth came the three Fates and prophesied of him three things, namely these; that he should have great strength of his hands, and good fortune in this life, and that he should live no longer when the brand then in the fire were consumed: wherefore his mother plucked it forth and kept it by her. And the child being a man grown sailed with Jason after the fleece of gold, and won himself great praise of all men living; and when the tribes of the north and west made war upon Ætolia, he fought against their army and scattered it. But Artemis, having at the first stirred up these tribes to war against Ceneus king of Calydon, because he had offered sacrifice to all the gods saving her alone, but her he had forgotten to honour, was yet more wroth because of the destruction of this army, and sent upon the land of Calydon a wild boar which slew many and wasted all their increase, but him could none slay, and many went against him and perished. Then were all the chief men of Greece gathered together, and among them Atalanta daughter of Iasius the Arcadian, a virgin; for whose sake Artemis let slay the boar, seeing she favoured the maiden greatly; and Meleager having despatched it gave the spoil thereof to Atalanta, as one beyond measure enamoured of her; but the brethren of Althæa his mother, Toxeus and Plexippus, with such others as misliked that she only should bear off the praise whereas many had borne the labour, laid wait for her to take away her spoil; but Meleager fought against them and slew them: whom when Althæa their sister

beheld and knew to be slain of her son, she waxed for wrath and sorrow like as one mad, and taking the brand whereby the measure of her son's life was meted to him, she cast it upon a fire; and with the wasting thereof his life likewise wasted away, that being brought back to his father's house he died in a brief space; and his mother also endured not long after for very sorrow; and this was his end, and the end of that hunting.

PERSONS

CHIEF HUNTSMAN.

CHORUS.

ALTHÆA.

MELEAGER.

CENEUS.

ATALANTA.

TOXEUS.

PLEXIPPUS.

HERALD.

MESSENGER.

SECOND MESSENGER.

ἴστω δ' ὅστις οὐχ ὑπόπτερος
 φροντίσιν δαεῖς,
 τὰν ἄ παιδολύμας τάλαινα Θεστιάς μήσατο
 πυρδαῇ τινα πρόνοιαν,
 καταίθουσα παιδὸς δαφονόν
 δαλὸν ἥλικ', ἐπεὶ μολῶν
 ματρόθεν κελάδησε;
 σύμμετρόν τε διαὶ βίου
 μοιρόκραντον ἐς ἄμαρ.

ÆSCH. *Cho.* 602–612.

ATALANTA IN CALYDON

CHIEF HUNTSMAN

MAIDEN, and mistress of the months and stars
Now folded in the flowerless fields of heaven,
Goddess whom all gods love with threefold heart,
Being treble in thy divided deity,
A light for dead men and dark hours, a foot 5
Swift on the hills as morning, and a hand
To all things fierce and fleet that roar and range
Mortal, with gentler shafts than snow or sleep;
Hear now and help and lift no violent hand,
But favourable and fair as thine eye's beam 10
Hidden and shown in heaven; for I all night
Amid the king's hounds and the hunting men
Have wrought and worshipped toward thee; nor shall man
See goodlier hounds or deadlier edge of spears;
But for the end, that lies unreached as yet 15
Between the hands and on the knees of gods.
O fair-faced sun killing the stars and dews
And dreams and desolation of the night!
Rise, up, shine, stretch thine hand out, with thy bow
Touch the most dimmest height of trembling heaven, 20
And burn and break the dark about thy ways,
Shot through and through with arrows; let thine hair
Lighten as flame above that flameless shell

Which was the moon, and thine eyes fill the world
And thy lips kindle with swift beams; let earth
Laugh, and the long sea fiery from thy feet
Through all the roar and ripple of streaming springs
And foam in reddening flakes and flying flowers
Shaken from hands and blown from lips of nymphs
Whose hair or breast divides the wandering wave
With salt close tresses cleaving lock to lock,
All gold, or shuddering and unfurrowed snow;
And all the winds about thee with their wings,
And fountain-heads of all the watered world;
Each horn of Acheloüs, and the green
Euenus, wedded with the straitening sea.
For in fair time thou comest; come also thou,
Twin-born with him, and virgin, Artemis,
And give our spears their spoil, the wild boar's hide,
Sent in thine anger against us for sin done
And bloodless altars without wine or fire.
Him now consume thou; for thy sacrifice
With sanguine-shining steam divides the dawn,
And one, the maiden rose of all thy maids,
Arcadian Atalanta, snowy-souled,
Fair as the snow and footed as the wind,
From Ladon and well-wooded Mænalus
Over the firm hills and the fleeting sea
Hast thou drawn hither, and many an armèd king,
Heroes, the crown of men, like gods in fight.
Moreover out of all the Ætolian land,
From the full-flowered Lelantian pasturage
To what of fruitful field the son of Zeus
Won from the roaring river and labouring sea
When the wild god shrank in his horn and fled

And foamed and lessened through his wrathful fords
Leaving clear lands that steamed with sudden sun,
These virgins with the lightening of the day
Bring thee fresh wreaths and their own sweeter hair,
Luxurious locks and flower-like mixed with flowers, 60
Clean offering, and chaste hymns; but me the time
Divides from these things; whom do thou not less
Help and give honour, and to mine hounds good speed,
And edge to spears, and luck to each man's hand.

CHORUS

When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces, 65
The mother of months in meadow or plain
Fills the shadows and windy places
With lisp of leaves and ripple of rain;
And the brown bright nightingale amorous
Is half assuaged for Itylus, 70
For the Thracian ships and the foreign faces,
The tongueless vigil, and all the pain.

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,
Maiden most perfect, lady of light,
With a noise of winds and many rivers, 75
With a clamour of waters, and with might;
Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
Over the splendour and speed of thy feet;
For the faint east quickens, the wan west shivers,
Round the feet of the day and the feet of the night. 80

Where shall we find her, how shall we sing to her,
Fold our hands round her knees, and cling?
O that man's heart were as fire and could spring to her,

Fire, or the strength of the streams that spring!
 For the stars and the winds are unto her 85
 As raiment, as songs of the harp-player;
 For the risen stars and the fallen cling to her,
 And the southwest-wind and the west-wind sing.

For winter's rains and ruins are over,
 And all the season of snows and sins; 90
 The days dividing lover and lover,
 The light that loses, the night that wins;
 And time remembered is grief forgotten,
 And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
 And in green underwood and cover 95
 Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

The full streams feed on flower of rushes,
 Ripe grasses trammel a travelling foot,
 The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes
 From leaf to flower and flower to fruit; 100
 And fruit and leaf are as gold and fire,
 And the oat is heard above the lyre,
 And the hoofèd heel of a satyr crushes
 The chestnut-husk at the chestnut-root.

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night, 105
 Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid,
 Follows with dancing and fills with delight
 The Mænad and the Bassarid;
 And soft as lips that laugh and hide
 The laughing leaves of the trees divide, 110
 And screen from seeing and leaving in sight
 The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair
 Over her eyebrows hiding her eyes;
The wild vine slipping down leaves bare 115
 Her bright breast shortening into sighs;
The wild vine slips with the weight of its leaves,
But the berried ivy catches and cleaves
To the limbs that glitter, the feet that scare
 The wolf that follows, the fawn that flies. 120

ALTHÆA

What do ye singing? What is this ye sing?

CHORUS

Flowers bring we, and pure lips that please the gods,
And raiment meet for service: lest the day
Turn sharp with all its honey in our lips.

ALTHÆA

Night, a black hound, follows the white fawn day, 125
Swifter than dreams the white flown feet of sleep;
Will ye pray back the night with any prayers?
And though the spring put back a little while
Winter, and snows that plague all men for sin,
And the iron time of cursing, yet I know 130
Spring shall be ruined with the rain, and storm
Eat up like fire the ashen autumn days.
I marvel what men do with prayers awake
Who dream and die with dreaming; any god,
Yea the least god of all things called divine, 135
Is more than sleep and waking; yet we say,
Perchance by praying a man shall match his god.

For if sleep have no mercy, and man's dreams
 Bite to the blood and burn into the bone,
 What shall this man do waking? By the gods, 140
 He shall not pray to dream sweet things to-night,
 Having dreamt once more bitter things than death.

CHORUS

Queen, but what is it that hath burnt thine heart?
 For thy speech flickers like a blown-out flame.

ALTHÆA

Look, ye say well, and know not what ye say; 145
 For all my sleep is turned into a fire,
 And all my dreams to stuff that kindles it.

CHORUS

Yet one doth well being patient of the gods.

ALTHÆA

Yea, lest they smite us with some four-foot plague.

CHORUS

But when time spreads find out some herb for it. 150

ALTHÆA

And with their healing herbs infect our blood.

CHORUS

What ails thee to be jealous of their ways?

ALTHÆA

What if they give us poisonous drinks for wine?

CHORUS

They have their will; much talking mends it not.

ALTHÆA

And gall for milk, and cursing for a prayer? 155

CHORUS

Have they not given life, and the end of life?

ALTHÆA

Lo, where they heal, they help not; thus they do,
They mock us with a little piteousness,
And we say prayers and weep; but at the last,
Sparing awhile, they smite and spare no whit. 160

CHORUS

Small praise man gets dispraising the high gods:
What have they done that thou dishonourest them?

ALTHÆA

First Artemis for all this harried land
I praise not, and for wasting of the boar
That mars with tooth and tusk and fiery feet 165
Green pasturage and the grace of standing corn
And meadow and marsh with springs and unblown leaves,

Flocks and swift herds and all that bite sweet grass,
I praise her not; what things are these to praise?

CHORUS

But when the king did sacrifice, and gave 170
Each god fair dues of wheat and blood and wine,
Her not with bloodshed nor burnt-offering
Revered he, nor with salt or cloven cake;
Wherefore being wroth she plagued the land; but now
Takes off from us fate and her heavy things. 175
Which deed of these twain were not good to praise?
For a just deed looks always either way
With blameless eyes, and mercy is no fault.

ALTHÆA

Yea, but a curse she hath sent above all these
To hurt us where she healed us; and hath lit 180
Fire where the old fire went out, and where the wind
Slackened, hath blown on us with deadlier air.

CHORUS

What storm is this that tightens all our sail?

ALTHÆA

Love, a thwart sea-wind full of rain and foam.

CHORUS

Whence blown, and born under what stormier star? 185

ALTHÆA

Southward across Euenus from the sea.

CHORUS

Thy speech turns toward Arcadia like blown wind.

ALTHÆA

Sharp as the north sets when the snows are out.

CHORUS

Nay, for this maiden hath no touch of love.

ALTHÆA

I would she had sought in some cold gulf of sea 190
Love, or in dens where strange beasts lurk, or fire,
Or snows on the extreme hills, or iron land
Where no spring is; I would she had sought therein
And found, or ever love had found her here.

CHORUS

She is holier than all holy days or things, 195
The sprinkled water or fume of perfect fire;
Chaste, dedicated to pure prayers, and filled
With higher thoughts than heaven; a maiden clean,
Pure iron, fashioned for a sword; and man
She loves not; what should one such do with love? 200

ALTHÆA

Look you, I speak not as one light of wit,
 But as a queen speaks, being heart-vexed; for oft
 I hear my brothers wrangling in mid hall,
 And am not moved; and my son chiding them,
 And these things nowise move me, but I know 205
 Foolish and wise men must be to the end,
 And feed myself with patience; but this most,
 This moves me, that for wise men as for fools
 Love is one thing, an evil thing, and turns
 Choice words and wisdom into fire and air. 210
 And in the end shall no joy come, but grief,
 Sharp words and soul's division and fresh tears
 Flower-wise upon the old root of tears brought forth,
 Fruit-wise upon the old flower of tears sprung up,
 Pitiful sighs, and much regrafted pain. 215
 These things are in my presage, and myself
 Am part of them and know not; but in dreams
 The gods are heavy on me, and all the fates
 Shed fire across my eyelids mixed with night,
 And burn me blind, and disilluminate 220
 My sense of seeing, and my perspicuous soul
 Darken with vision; seeing I see not, hear
 And hearing am not holpen, but mine eyes
 Stain many tender broideries in the bed
 Drawn up about my face that I may weep 225
 And the king wake not; and my brows and lips
 Tremble and sob in sleeping, like swift flames
 That tremble, or water when it sobs with heat
 Kindled from under; and my tears fill my breast
 And speck the fair dyed pillows round the king 230

With barren showers and salter than the sea,
Such dreams divide me dreaming; for long since
I dreamed that out of this my womb had sprung
Fire and a firebrand; this was ere my son,
Meleager, a goodly flower in fields of fight, 235,
Felt the light touch him coming forth, and wailed
Childlike; but yet he was not; and in time
I bare him, and my heart was great; for yet
So royally was never strong man born,
Nor queen so nobly bore as noble a thing 240
As this my son was: such a birth God sent
And such a grace to bear it. Then came in
Three weaving women, and span each a thread,
Saying This for strength and That for luck, and one
Saying Till the brand upon the hearth burn down } 245
So long shall this man see good days and live. }
And I with gathered raiment from the bed
Sprang, and drew forth the brand, and cast on it
Water, and trod the flame bare-foot, and crushed
With naked hand spark beaten out of spark 250
And blew against and quenched it; for I said,
These are the most high Fates that dwell with us,
And we find favour a little in their sight,
A little, and more we miss of, and much time
Foins us; howbeit they have pitied me, O Son, 255
And thee most piteous, thee a tenderer thing
Than any flower of fleshly seed alive.
Wherefore I kissed and hid him with my hands,
And covered under arms and hair, and wept,
And feared to touch him with my tears, and laughed; 260
So light a thing was this man, grown so great
Men cast their heads back, seeing against the sun

Blaze the armed man carven on his shield, and hear
 The laughter of little bells along the brace
 Ring, as birds singing or flutes blown, and watch, 265
 High up, the cloven shadow of either plume
 Divide the bright light of the brass, and make
 His helmet as a windy and wintering moon
 Seen through blown cloud and plume-like drift, when ships
 Drive, and men strive with all the sea, and oars 270
 Break, and the beaks dip under, drinking death;
 Yet was he then but a span long, and moaned
 With inarticulate mouth inseparate words,
 And with blind lips and fingers wrung my breast
 Hard, and thrust out with foolish hands and feet, 275
 Murmuring; but those grey women with bound hair
 Who fright the gods frightened not him; he laughed
 Seeing them, and pushed out hands to feel and haul
 Distaff and thread, intangible; but they
 Passed, and I hid the brand, and in my heart 280
 Laughed likewise, having all my will of heaven.
 But now I know not if to left or right
 The gods have drawn us hither; for again
 I dreamt, and saw the black brand burst on fire
 As a branch bursts in flower, and saw the flame 285
 Fade flower-wise, and Death came and with dry lips
 Blew the charred ash into my breast; and Love
 Trampled the ember and crushed it with swift feet.
 This I have also at heart; that not for me,
 Not for me only or son of mine, O girls, 290
 The gods have wrought life, and desire of life,
 Heart's love and heart's division; but for all
 There shines one sun and one wind blows till night.
 And when night comes the wind sinks and the sun,

And there is no light after, and no storm, 295
But sleep and much forgetfulness of things.
In such wise I gat knowledge of the gods
Years hence, and heard high sayings of one most wise,
Eurythemis my mother, who beheld
With eyes alive and spake with lips of these 300
As one on earth disfleshed and disallied
From breath or blood corruptible; such gifts
Time gave her, and an equal soul to these
And equal face to all things; thus she said.
But whatsoever intolerable or glad 305
The swift hours weave and unweave, I go hence
Full of mine own soul, perfect of myself,
Toward mine and me sufficient; and what chance
The gods cast lots for and shake out on us,
That shall we take, and that much bear withal. 310
And now, before these gather to the hunt,
I will go arm my son and bring him forth,
Lest love or some man's anger work him harm.

CHORUS

Before the beginning of years
There came to the making of man 315
Time, with a gift of tears;
Grief, with a glass that ran;
Pleasure, with pain for leaven;
Summer, with flowers that fell;
Remembrance fallen from heaven, 320
And madness risen from hell;
Strength without hands to smite;
Love that endures for a breath:

Night, the shadow of light,
And life, the shadow of death. 325

And the high gods took in hand
Fire, and the falling of tears,
And a measure of sliding sand
From under the feet of the years;
And froth and drift of the sea; 330
And dust of the labouring earth;
And bodies of things to be
In the houses of death and of birth;
And wrought with weeping and laughter,
And fashioned with loathing and love, 335
With life before and after
And death beneath and above,
For a day and a night and a morrow,
That his strength might endure for a span
With travail and heavy sorrow, 340
The holy spirit of man.

From the winds of the north and the south
They gathered as unto strife;
They breathed upon his mouth,
They filled his body with life; 345
Eyesight and speech they wrought
For the veils of the soul therein,
A time for labour and thought,
A time to serve and to sin;
They gave him light in his ways, 350
And love, and a space for delight,
And beauty and length of days,
And night, and sleep in the night.
His speech is a burning fire;

With his lips he travailleth; 355
In his heart is a blind desire,
In his eyes foreknowledge of death;
He weaves, and is clothed with derision;
Sows, and he shall not reap;
His life is a watch or a vision, 360
Between a sleep and a sleep.

MELEAGER

O sweet new heaven and air without a star,
Fair day, be fair and welcome, as to men
With deeds to do and praise to pluck from thee.
Come forth a child, born with clear sound and light, 365
With laughter and swift limbs and prosperous looks;
That this great hunt with heroes for the hounds
May leave thee memorable and us well sped.

ALTHÆA

Son, first I praise thy prayer, then bid thee speed;
But the gods hear men's hands before their lips, 370
And heed beyond all crying and sacrifice
Light of things done and noise of labouring men.
But thou, being armed and perfect for the deed,
Abide; for like rain-flakes in a wind they grow,
The men thy fellows, and the choice of the world, 375
Bound to root out the tuskèd plague, and leave
Thanks and safe days and peace in Calydon.

MELEAGER

For the whole city and all the low-lying land
Flames, and the soft air sounds with them that come;
The gods give all these fruit of all their works. 380

ALTHÆA

Set thine eye thither and fix thy spirit and say
Whom there thou knowest; for sharp mixed shadow and
wind

Blown up between the morning and the mist,
With steam of steeds and flash of bridle or wheel,
And fire, and parcels of the broken dawn, 385
And dust divided by hard light, and spears
That shine and shift as the edge of wild beasts' eyes,
Smite upon mine; so fiery their blind edge
Burns, and bright points break up and baffle day.

MELEAGER

The first, for many I know not, being far off, 390
Peleus the Larissæan, couched with whom
Sleeps the white sea-bred wife and silver-shod,
Fair as fled foam, a goddess; and their son
Most swift and splendid of men's children born,
Most like a god, full of the future fame. 395

ALTHÆA

Who are these shining like one sundered star?

MELEAGER

Thy sister's sons, a double flower of men.

ALTHÆA

O sweetest kin to me in all the world,
O twin-born blood of Leda, gracious heads
Like kindled lights in untempestuous heaven, 400
Fair flower-like stars on the iron foam of fight,

With what glad heart and kindliness of soul,
Even to the staining of both eyes with tears
And kindling of warm eyelids with desire,
A great way off I greet you, and rejoice 405
Seeing you so fair, and moulded like as gods.
Far off ye come, and least in years of these,
But lordliest, but worth love to look upon.

MELEAGER

Even such (for sailing hither I saw far hence,
And where Eurotas hollows his moist rock 410
Nigh Sparta with a strenuous-hearted stream)
Even such I saw their sisters; one swan-white,
The little Helen, and less fair than she
Fair Clytæmnestra, grave as pasturing fawns
Who feed and fear some arrow; but at whiles, 415
As one smitten with love or wrung with joy,
She laughs and lightens with her eyes, and then
Weeps; whereat Helen, having laughed, weeps too,
And the other chides her, and she being chid speaks
nought,
But cheeks and lips and eyelids kisses her, 420
Laughing; so fare they, as in their bloomless bud
And full of unblown life, the blood of gods.

ALTHÆA

Sweet days befall them and good loves and lords,
And tender and temperate honours of the hearth,
Peace, and a perfect life and blameless bed. 425
But who shows next an eagle wrought in gold,
That flames and beats broad wings against the sun
And with void mouth gapes after emptier prey?

MELEAGER

Know by that sign the reign of Telamon
Between the fierce mouths of the encountering brine 430
On the strait reefs of twice-washed Salamis.

ALTHÆA

For like one great of hand he bears himself,
Vine-chapleted, with savours of the sea,
Glittering as wine and moving as a wave.
But who girt round there roughly follows him? 435

MELEAGER

Ancæus, great of hand, an iron bulk,
Two-edged for fight as the axe against his arm,
Who drives against the surge of stormy spears,
Full-sailed; him Cepheus follows, his twin-born,
Chief name next his of all Arcadian men. 440

ALTHÆA

Praise be with men abroad; chaste lives with us,
Home-keeping days and household reverences.

MELEAGER

Next by the left unsandalled foot know thou
The sail and oar of this Ætolian land,
Thy brethren, Toxeus and the violent-souled 445
Plexippus, over-swift with hand and tongue;
For hands are fruitful, but the ignorant mouth
Blows and corrupts their work with barren breath.

ALTHÆA

Speech too bears fruit, being worthy; and air blows down
Things poisonous, and high-seated violences, 450
And with charmed words and songs have men put out
Wild evil, and the fire of tyrannies.

MELEAGER

Yea, all things have they, save the gods and love.

ALTHÆA

Love thou the law and cleave to things ordained.

MELEAGER

Law lives upon their lips whom these applaud. 455

ALTHÆA

How sayest thou these? what god applauds new things?

MELEAGER

Zeus, who hath fear and custom under foot.

ALTHÆA

But loves not laws thrown down and lives awry.

MELEAGER

Yet is not less himself than his own law.

ALTHÆA

Nor shifts and shuffles old things up and down. 460

MELEAGER

But what he will remoulds and discreates.

ALTHÆA

Much, but not this, that each thing live its life.

MELEAGER

Nor only live, but lighten and lift up higher.

ALTHÆA

Pride breaks itself, and too much gained is gone.

MELEAGER

Things gained are gone, but great things done endure. 465

ALTHÆA

Child, if a man serve law through all his life
 And with his whole heart worship, him all gods
 Praise; but who loves it only with his lips,
 And not in heart and deed desiring it
 Hides a perverse will with obsequious words, 470
 Him heaven infatuates and his twin-born fate
 Tracks, and gains on him, scenting sins far off,
 And the swift hounds of violent death devour.
 Be man at one with equal-minded gods,
 So shall he prosper; not through laws torn up, 475
 Violated rule and a new face of things.
 A woman armed makes war upon herself,

Unwomanlike, and treads down use and wont
And the sweet common honour that she hath,
Love, and the cry of children, and the hand 480
Trothplight and mutual mouth of marriages.
This doth she, being unloved; whom if one love,
Not fire nor iron and the wide-mouthed wars
Are deadlier than her lips or braided hair.
For of the one comes poison, and a curse 485
Falls from the other and burns the lives of men.
But thou, son, be not filled with evil dreams,
Nor with desire of these things; for with time
Blind love burns out; but if one feed it full
Till some discolouring stain dyes all his life, 490
He shall keep nothing praiseworthy, nor die
The sweet wise death of old men honourable,
Who have lived out all the length of all their years
Blameless, and seen well-pleased the face of gods,
And without shame and without fear have wrought 495
Things memorable, and while their days held out
In sight of all men and the sun's great light
Have gat them glory and given of their own praise
To the earth that bare them and the day that bred,
Home friends and far-off hospitalities, 500
And filled with gracious and memorial fame
Lands loved of summer or washed by violent seas,
Towns populous and many unfooted ways,
And alien lips and native with their own.
But when white age and venerable death 505
Mow down the strength and life within their limbs,
Drain out the blood and darken their clear eyes,
Immortal honour is on them, having past
Through splendid life and death desirable

To the clear seat and remote throne of souls, 510
 Lands indiscoverable in the unheard-of west,
 Round which the strong stream of a sacred sea
 Rolls without wind for ever, and the snow
 There shows not her white wings and windy feet,
 Nor thunder nor swift rain saith anything, 515
 Nor the sun burns, but all things rest and thrive;
 And these, filled full of days, divine and dead,
 Sages and singers fiery from the god,
 And such as loved their land and all things good
 And, best beloved of best men, liberty, 520
 Free lives and lips, free hands of men free-born,
 And whatsoever on earth was honourable
 And whosoever of all the ephemeral seed,
 Live there a life no liker to the gods
 But nearer than their life of terrene days. 525
 Love thou such life and look for such a death.
 But from the light and fiery dreams of love
 Spring heavy sorrows and a sleepless life,
 Visions not dreams, whose lids no charm shall close
 Nor song assuage them waking; and swift death 530
 Crushes with sterile feet the unripening ear,
 Treads out the timeless vintage; whom do thou
 Eschewing embrace the luck of this thy life,
 Not without honour; and it shall bear to thee
 Such fruit as men reap from spent hours and wear, 535
 Few men, but happy; of whom be thou, O son,
 Happiest, if thou submit thy soul to fate,
 (And set thine eyes and heart on hopes high-born
 And divine deeds and abstinence divine.
 So shalt thou be toward all men all thy days 540
 As light and might communicable, and burn

From heaven among the stars above the hours,
And break not as a man breaks nor burn down.
For to whom other of all heroic names
Have the gods given his life in hand as thine? 545
And gloriously hast thou lived, and made thy life
To me that bare thee and to all men born
Thankworthy, a praise for ever; and hast won fame
When wild wars broke all round thy father's house,
And the mad people of windy mountain ways 550
Laid spears against us like a sea, and all
Ætolia thundered with Thessalian hoofs;
Yet these, as wind baffles the foam, and beats
Straight back the relaxed ripple, didst thou break
And loosen all their lances, till undone 555
And man from man they fell; for ye twain stood
God against god, Ares and Artemis,
And thou the mightier; wherefore she unleashed
A sharp-toothed curse thou too shalt overcome;
For in the greener blossom of thy life 560
Ere the full blade caught flower, and when time gave
Respite, thou didst not slacken soul nor sleep,
But with great hand and heart seek praise of men
Out of sharp straits and many a grievous thing,
Seeing the strange foam of undivided seas, 565
On channels never sailed in, and by shores
Where the old winds cease not blowing, and all the night
Thunders, and day is no delight to men.

CHORUS

Meleager, a noble wisdom and fair words
The gods have given this woman; hear thou these. 570

MELEAGER

O mother, I am not fain to strive in speech
 Nor set my mouth against thee, who art wise
 Even as they say and full of sacred words.
 But one thing I know surely, and cleave to this;
 That though I be not subtle of wit as thou 575
 Nor womanlike to weave sweet words, and melt
 Mutable minds of wise men as with fire,
 I too, doing justly and reverencing the gods,
 Shall not want wit to see what things be right.
 For whom they love and whom reject, being gods, 580
 There is no man but seeth, and in good time
 Submits himself, refraining all his heart.
 And I too as thou sayest have seen great things;
 Seen elsewhere, but chiefly when the sail
 First caught between stretched ropes the roaring west, 585
 And all our oars smote eastward, and the wind
 First flung round faces of seafaring men
 White splendid snow-flakes of the sundering foam,
 And the first furrow in virginal green sea
 Followed the plunging ploughshare of hewn pine, 590
 And closed, as when deep sleep subdues man's breath
 Lips close and heart subsides; and closing, shone
 Sunlike with many a Nereid's hair, and moved
 Round many a trembling mouth of doubtful gods,
 Risen out of sunless and sonorous gulfs 595
 Through waning water and into shallow light,
 That watched us; and when flying the dove was snared
 As with men's hands, but we shot after and sped
 Clear through the irremeable Symplegades;
 And chiefiest when hoar beach and herbless cliff 600
 Stood out ahead from Colchis, and we heard

Clefts hoarse with wind, and saw through narrowing reefs
The lightning of the intolerable wave
Flash, and the white wet flame of breakers burn
Far under a kindling south-wind, as a lamp 605
Burns and bends all its blowing flame one way;
Wild heights untravelled of the wind, and vales
Cloven seaward by their violent streams, and white
With bitter flowers and bright salt scurf of brine;
Heard sweep their sharp swift gales, and bowing bird-
wise 610
Shriek with birds' voices, and with furious feet
Tread loose the long skirts of a storm; and saw
The whole white Euxine clash together and fall
Full-mouthed, and thunderous from a thousand throats:
Yet we drew thither and won the fleece and won 615
Medea, deadlier than the sea; but there
Seeing many a wonder and fearful things to men
I saw not one thing like this one seen here,
Most fair and fearful, feminine, a god,
Faultless; whom I that love not, being unlike, 620
Fear, and give honour, and choose from all the gods.

ÆNEUS

Lady, the daughter of Thestius, and thou, son,
Not ignorant of your strife nor light of wit,
Scared with vain dreams and fluttering like spent fire,
I come to judge between you, but a king 625
Full of past days and wise from years endured.
Nor thee I praise, who art fain to undo things done:
Nor thee, who art swift to esteem them overmuch.
For what the hours have given is given, and this
Changeless; howbeit these change, and in good time 630
Devise new things and good, not one thing still.

Us have they sent now at our need for help
 Among men armed a woman, foreign born,
 Virgin, not like the natural flower of things
 That grows and bears and brings forth fruit and dies; 635
 Unlovable, no light for a husband's house,
 Espoused; a glory among unwedded girls,
 And chosen of gods who reverence maidenhood.
 These too we honour in honouring her; but thou,
 Abstain thy feet from following, and thine eyes 640
 From amorous touch; nor set toward hers thine heart,
 Son, lest hate bear no deadlier fruit than love.

ALTHÆA

O king, thou art wise, but wisdom halts; and just,
 But the gods love not justice more than fate,
 And smite the righteous and the violent mouth, 645
 And mix with insolent blood the reverent man's,
 And bruise the holier as the lying lips.
 Enough; for wise words fail me, and my heart
 Takes fire and trembles flamewise, O my son,
 O child, for thine head's sake; mine eyes wax thick, 650
 Turning toward thee, so goodly a weaponed man,
 So glorious; and for love of thine own eyes
 They are darkened, and tears burn them, fierce as fire,
 And my lips pause and my soul sinks with love.
 But by thine hand, by thy sweet life and eyes, 655
 By thy great heart and these clasped knees, O son,
 I pray thee that thou slay me not with thee.
 For there was never a mother woman-born
 Loved her sons better; and never a queen of men
 More perfect in her heart toward whom she loved. 660
 For what lies light on many and they forget,

Small things and transitory as a wind o' the sea,
I forget never; I have seen thee all thine years
A man in arms, strong and a joy to men
Seeing thine head glitter and thine hand burn its way 665
Through a heavy and iron furrow of sundering spears;
But always also a flower of three suns old, —
The small one thing that lying drew down my life
To lie with thee and feed thee; a child and weak,
Mine, a delight to no man, sweet to me. 670
Who then sought to thee? who gat help? who knew
If thou wert goodly? nay, no man at all.
Or what sea saw thee, or sounded with thine oar,
Child? or what strange land shone with war through thee?
But fair for me thou wert, O little life, 675
Fruitless, the fruit of mine own flesh, and blind,
More than much gold, ungrown, a foolish flower.
For silver nor bright snow nor feather of foam
Was whiter, and no gold yellower than thine hair,
O child, my child; and now thou art lordlier grown, 680
Not lovelier, nor a new thing in mine eyes,
I charge thee by thy soul and this my breast,
Fear thou the gods and me and thine own heart,
Lest all these turn against thee; for who knows
What wind upon what wave of altering time 685
Shall speak a storm and blow calamity?
And there is nothing stabile in the world ✓
But the gods break it; yet not less, fair son,
If but one thing be stronger, if one endure,
Surely the bitter and the rooted love 690
That burns between us, going from me to thee,
Shall more endure than all things. / What dost thou,
Following strange loves? why wilt thou kill mine heart?

Lo, I talk wild and windy words, and fall
 From my clear wits, and seem of mine own self 695
 Dethroned, dispraised, disseated; and my mind,
 That was my crown, breaks, and mine heart is gone,
 And I am naked of my soul, and stand
 Ashamed, as a mean woman; take thou thought:
 Live if thou wilt, and if thou wilt not, look, 700
 The gods have given thee life to lose or keep,
 Thou shalt not die as men die, but thine end
 Fallen upon thee shall break me unaware.

MELEAGER

Queen, my whole heart is molten with thy tears,
 And my limbs yearn with pity of thee, and love 705
 Compels with grief mine eyes and labouring breath;
 For what thou art I know thee, and this thy breast
 And thy fair eyes I worship, and am bound
 Toward thee in spirit and love thee in all my soul.
 For there is nothing terribler to men 710
 Than the sweet face of mothers, and the might.
 But what shall be let be; for us the day
 Once only lives a little, and is not found.
 Time and the fruitful hour are more than we,
 And these lay hold upon us; but thou, God, 715
 Zeus, the sole steersman of the helm of things,
 Father, be swift to see us, and as thou wilt
 Help: or if adverse, as thou wilt, refrain.

CHORUS

We have seen thee, O Love, thou art fair; thou art goodly,
 O Love;

Thy wings make light in the air as the wings of a dove. 720
Thy feet are as winds that divide the stream of the sea;
Earth is thy covering to hide thee, the garment of thee.
Thou art swift and subtle and blind as a flame of fire;
Before thee the laughter, behind thee the tears of desire;
And twain go forth beside thee, a man with a maid; 725
Her eyes are the eyes of a bride whom delight makes
afraid;
As the breath in the buds that stir is her bridal breath:
But Fate is the name of her; and his name is Death.

For an evil blossom was born
Of sea-foam and the frothing of blood, 730
Blood-red and bitter of fruit,
And the seed of it laughter and tears,
And the leaves of it madness and scorn;
A bitter flower from the bud,
Sprung of the sea without root, 735
Sprung without graft from the years.

The weft of the world was untorn
That is woven of the day on the night,
The hair of the hours was not white
Nor the raiment of time overworn, 740
When a wonder, a world's delight,
A perilous goddess was born;
And the waves of the sea as she came
Clove, and the foam at her feet,
Fawning, rejoiced to bring forth 745
A fleshly blossom, a flame
Filling the heavens with heat
To the cold white ends of the north.

And in air the clamorous birds,
 And men upon earth that hear 750
 Sweet articulate words

Sweetly divided apart,
 And in shallow and channel and mere
 The rapid and footless herds,
 Rejoiced, being foolish of heart. 755

For all they said upon earth,
 She is fair, she is white like a dove,
 And the life of the world in her breath
 Breathes, and is born at her birth;
 For they knew thee for mother of love, 760
 And knew thee not mother of death.

What hadst thou to do being born,
 Mother, when winds were at ease,
 As a flower of the springtime of corn,
 A flower of the foam of the seas? 765

For bitter thou wast from thy birth,
 Aphrodite, a mother of strife;
 For before thee some rest was on earth,
 A little respite from tears,
 A little pleasure of life; 770

For life was not then as thou art,
 But as one that waxeth in years
 Sweet-spoken, a fruitful wife;
 Earth had no thorn, and desire
 No sting, neither death any dart; 775

What hadst thou to do amongst these,
 Thou, clothed with a burning fire,
 Thou, girt with sorrow of heart,
 Thou, sprung of the seed of the seas

As an ear from a seed of corn, 780

As a brand plucked forth of a pyre,

As a ray shed forth of the morn,

For division of soul and disease,

For a dart and a sting and a thorn?

What ailed thee then to be born? 785

Was there not evil enough,

Mother, and anguish on earth

Born with a man at his birth,

Wastes underfoot, and above

Storm out of heaven, and dearth 790

Shaken down from the shining thereof,

Wrecks from afar overseas

And peril of shallow and firth,

And tears that spring and increase

In the barren places of mirth, 795

That thou, having wings as a dove,

Being girt with desire for a girth,

That thou must come after these,

That thou must lay on him love?

Thou shouldst not so have been born: 800

But death should have risen with thee,

Mother, and visible fear,

Grief, and the wringing of hands,

And noise of many that mourn;

The smitten bosom, the knee 805

Bowed, and in each man's ear

A cry as of perishing lands,

A moan as of people in prison,

A tumult of infinite griefs;

And thunder of storm on the sands, 810
 And wailing of wives on the shore;
 And under thee newly arisen
 Loud shoals and shipwrecking reefs,
 Fierce air and violent light;
 Sail rent and sundering oar, 815
 Darkness, and noises of night;
 Clashing of streams in the sea,
 Wave against wave as a sword,
 Clamour of currents, and foam;
 Rains making ruin on earth, 820
 Winds that wax ravenous and roam
 As wolves in a wolfish horde;
 Fruits growing faint in the tree,
 And blind things dead in their birth;
 Famine, and blighting of corn, 825
 When thy time was come to be born.

All these we know of; but thee
 Who shall discern or declare?
 In the uttermost ends of the sea
 The light of thine eyelids and hair, 830
 The light of thy bosom as fire
 Between the wheel of the sun
 And the flying flames of the air?
 Wilt thou turn thee not yet nor have pity,
 But abide with despair and desire 835
 And the crying of armies undone,
 Lamentation of one with another,
 And breaking of city by city;
 The dividing of friend against friend,
 The severing of brother and brother; 840

Wilt thou utterly bring to an end?
Have mercy, mother!

For against all men from of old
Thou hast set thine hand as a curse,
And cast out gods from their places. 845
These things are spoken of thee.
Strong kings and goodly with gold
Thou hast found out arrows to pierce,
And made their kingdoms and races
As dust and surf of the sea. 850
All these, overburdened with woes
And with length of their days waxen weak,
Thou slewest; and sentest moreover
Upon Tyro an evil thing,
Rent hair and a fetter and blows 855
Making bloody the flower of the cheek,
Though she lay by a god as a lover,
Though fair, and the seed of a king.
For of old, being full of thy fire,
She endured not longer to wear 860
On her bosom a saffron vest,
On her shoulder an ashwood quiver;
Being mixed and made one through desire
With Enipeus, and all her hair
Made moist with his mouth, and her breast 865
Filled full of the foam of the river.

ATALANTA

Sun, and clear light among green hills, and day
Late risen and long sought after, and you just gods
Whose hands divide anguish and recompense,

But first the sun's white sister, a maid in heaven, 870
 On earth of all maids worshipped—hail, and hear,
 And witness with me if not without sign sent,
 Not without rule and reverence, I a maid
 Hallowed, and huntress holy as whom I serve,
 Here in your sight and eyeshot of these men 875
 Stand, girt as they toward hunting, and my shafts
 Drawn; wherefore all ye stand up on my side,
 If I be pure and all ye righteous gods,
 Lest one revile me, a woman, yet no wife,
 That bear a spear for spindle, and this bow strung 880
 For a web woven; and with pure lips salute
 Heaven, and the face of all the gods, and dawn
 Filling with maiden flames and maiden flowers
 The starless fold o' the stars, and making sweet
 The warm wan heights of the air, moon-trodden ways 885
 And breathless gates and extreme hills of heaven.
 Whom, having offered water and bloodless gifts,
 Flowers, and a golden circlet of pure hair,
 Next Artemis I bid be favourable
 And make this day all golden, hers and ours, 890
 Gracious and good and white to the unblamed end.
 But thou, O well-beloved, of all my days
 Bid it be fruitful, and a crown for all,
 To bring forth leaves and bind round all my hair
 With perfect chaplets woven for thine of thee. 895
 For not without the word of thy chaste mouth,
 For not without law given and clean command,
 Across the white straits of the running sea
 From Elis even to the Acheloïan horn,
 I with clear winds came hither and gentle gods, 900
 Far off my father's house, and left uncheered

Iasius, and uncheered the Arcadian hills
And all their green-haired waters, and all woods
Disconsolate, to hear no horn of mine
Blown, and behold no flash of swift white feet. 905

MELEAGER

For thy name's sake and awe toward thy chaste head,
O holiest Atalanta, no man dares
Praise thee, though fairer than whom all men praise,
And godlike for thy grace of hallowed hair
And holy habit of thine eyes, and feet 910
That make the blown foam neither swift nor white
Though the wind winnow and whirl it; yet we praise
Gods, found because of thee adorable
And for thy sake praiseworthy from all men:
Thee therefore we praise also, thee as these, 915
Pure, and a light lit at the hands of gods.

TOXEUS

How long will ye whet spears with eloquence,
Fight, and kill beasts dry-handed with sweet words?
Cease, or talk still and slay thy boars at home.

PLEXIPPUS

Why, if she ride among us for a man, 920
Sit thou for her and spin; a man grown girl
Is worth a woman weaponed; sit thou here.

MELEAGER

Peace, and be wise; no gods love idle speech.

PLEXIPPUS

Nor any man a man's mouth woman-tongued.

MELEAGER

For my lips bite not sharper than mine hands. 925

PLEXIPPUS

Nay, both bite soft, but no whit softly mine.

MELEAGER

Keep thine hands clean; they have time enough to stain.

PLEXIPPUS

For thine shall rest and wax not red to-day.

MELEAGER

Have all thy will of words; talk out thine heart.

ALTHÆA

Refrain your lips, O brethren, and my son, 930
Lest words turn snakes and bite you uttering them.

TOXEUS

Except she give her blood before the gods,
What profit shall a maid be among men?

PLEXIPPUS

Let her come crowned and stretch her throat for a knife,
Bleat out her spirit and die, and so shall men 935

Through her too prosper and through prosperous gods,
But nowise through her living; shall she live
A flower-bud of the flower-bed, or sweet fruit
For kisses and the honey-making mouth,
And play the shield for strong men and the spear? 940
Then shall the heifer and her mate lock horns,
And the bride overbear the groom, and men
Gods; for no less division sunders these;
Since all things made are seasonable in time,
But if one alter unseasonable are all. 945
But thou, O Zeus, hear me that I may slay
This best before thee and no man halve with me
Nor woman, lest these mock thee, though a god,
Who hast made men strong, and thou being wise be held
Foolish; for wise is that thing which endures. 950

ATALANTA

Men, and the chosen of all this people, and thou,
King, I beseech you a little bear with me.
For if my life be shameful that I live,
Let the gods witness and their wrath; but these
Cast no such word against me. Thou, O mine, 955
O holy, O happy goddess, if I sin
Changing the words of women and the works
For spears and strange men's faces, hast not thou
One shaft of all thy sudden seven that pierced
Seven through the bosom or shining throat or side, 960
All couched about one mother's loosening knees, *Niobe*
All holy born, engrafted of Tantalus?
But if toward any of you I am overbold
That take thus much upon me, let him think

How I, for all my forest holiness, 965
 Fame, and this armed and iron maidenhood,
 Pay thus much also; I shall have no man's love
 For ever, and no face of children born
 Or feeding lips upon me or fastening eyes
 For ever, nor being dead shall kings my sons 970
 Mourn me and bury, and tears on daughters' cheeks
 Burn; but a cold and sacred life, but strange,
 But far from dances and the back-blowing torch,
 Far off from flowers or any bed of man,
 Shall my life be for ever: me the snows 975
 That face the first o' the morning, and cold hills
 Full of the land-wind and sea-travelling storms
 And many a wandering wing of noisy nights
 That know the thunder and hear the thickening wolves—
 Me the utmost pine and footless frost of woods 980
 That talk with many winds and gods, the hours
 Re-risen, and white divisions of the dawn,
 Springs thousand-tongued with the intermitting reed
 And streams that murmur of the mother snow—
 Me these allure, and know me; but no man 985
 Knows, and my goddess only. Lo now, see
 If one of all you these things vex at all.
 Would God that any of you had all the praise
 And I no manner of memory when I die,
 So might I show before her perfect eyes 990
 Pure, whom I follow, a maiden to my death.
 But for the rest let all have all they will;
 For is it a grief to you that I have part,
 Being woman merely, in your male might and deeds
 Done by main strength? yet in my body is throned 995
 As great a heart, and in my spirit, O men,

I have not less of godlike. Evil it were
That one a coward should mix with you, one hand
Fearful, one eye abase itself; and these
Well might ye hate and well revile, not me. 1000
For not the difference of the several flesh
Being vile or noble or beautiful or base
Makes praiseworthy, but purer spirit and heart
Higher than these meaner mouths and limbs, that feed,
Rise, rest, and are and are not; and for me, 1005
What should I say? but by the gods of the world
And this my maiden body, by all oaths
That bind the tongue of men and the evil will,
I am not mighty-minded, nor desire
Crowns, nor the spoil of slain things nor the fame; 1010
Feed ye on these, eat and wax fat; cry out,
Laugh, having eaten, and leap without a lyre,
Sing, mix the wind with clamour, smite and shake
Sonorous timbrels and tumultuous hair,
And fill the dance up with tempestuous feet, 1015
For I will none; but having prayed my prayers
And made thank-offering for prosperities,
I shall go hence and no man see me more.
What thing is this for you to shout me down,
What; for a man to grudge me this my life 1020
As it were envious of all yours, and I
A thief of reputations? nay, for now,
If there be any highest in heaven, a god
Above all thrones and thunders of the gods
Throned, and the wheel of the world roll under him, 1025
Judge he between me and all of you, and see
If I transgress at all: but ye, refrain
Transgressing hands and reinless mouths, and keep

Silence, lest by much foam of violent words
 And proper poison of your lips ye die. 1030

CENEUS

O flower of Tegea, maiden, fleetest foot
 And holiest head of women, have good cheer
 Of thy good words: but ye, depart with her
 In peace and reverence, each with blameless eye
 Following his fate; exalt your hands and hearts, 1035
 Strike, cease not, arrow on arrow and wound on wound,
 And go with gods and with the gods return.

CHORUS

Who hath given man speech? or who hath set therein
 A thorn for peril and a snare for sin?
 For in the word his life is and his breath, 1040
 And in the word his death,
 That madness and the infatuate heart may breed
 From the word's womb the deed
 And life bring one thing forth ere all pass by,
 Even one thing which is ours yet cannot die— 1045
 Death. Hast thou seen him ever anywhere,
 Time's twin-born brother, imperishable as he
 Is perishable and plaintive, clothed with care
 And mutable as sand,
 But death is strong and full of blood and fair 1050
 And perdurable and like a lord of land?
 Nay, time thou seest not, death thou wilt not see
 Till life's right hand be loosened from thine hand
 And thy life-days from thee.

For the gods very subtly fashion 1055
 Madness with sadness upon earth:
Not knowing in any wise compassion,
 Nor holding pity of any worth;
And many things they have given and taken,
 And wrought and ruined many things; 1060
The firm land have they loosed and shaken,
 And sealed the sea with all her springs;
They have wearied time with heavy burdens
 And vexed the lips of life with breath:
Set men to labour and given them guerdons, 1065
 Death, and great darkness after death:
Put moans into the bridal measure
 And on the bridal wools a stain;
And circled pain about with pleasure,
 And girdled pleasure about with pain; 1070
And strewed one marriage-bed with tears and fire
For extreme loathing and supreme desire.

What shall be done with all these tears of ours?
 Shall they make watersprings in the fair heaven
To bathe the brows of morning? or like flowers 1075
Be shed and shine before the starriest hours,
 Or made the raiment of the weeping Seven?
Or rather, O our masters, shall they be
Food for the famine of the grievous sea,
 A great well-head of lamentation 1080
Satiating the sad gods? or fall and flow
Among the years and seasons to and fro,
 And wash their feet with tribulation
And fill them full with grieving ere they go?
 Alas, our lords, and yet alas again, 1085

Seeing all your iron heaven is gilt as gold
 But all we smite thereat in vain;
 Smite the gates barred with groanings manifold,
 But all the floors are paven with our pain.
 Yea, and with weariness of lips and eyes, 1090
 With breaking of the bosom, and with sighs,
 We labour, and are clad and fed with grief
 And filled with days we would not fain behold
 And nights we would not hear of; we wax old,
 All we wax old and wither like a leaf. 1095
 We are outcast, strayed between bright sun and moon;
 Our light and darkness are as leaves of flowers,
 Black flowers and white, that perish; and the noon
 As midnight, and the night as daylight hours.
 A little fruit a little while is ours, 1100
 And the worm finds it soon.

But up in heaven the high gods one by one
 Lay hands upon the draught that quickeneth,
 Fulfilled with all tears shed and all things done,
 And stir with soft imperishable breath 1105
 The bubbling bitterness of life and death,
 And hold it to our lips and laugh; but they
 Preserve their lips from tasting night or day,
 Lest they too change and sleep, the fates that spun,
 The lips that made us and the hands that slay; 1110
 Lest all these change, and heaven bow down to none,
 Change and be subject to the secular sway
 And terrene revolution of the sun.
 Therefore they thrust it from them, putting time away.

I would the wine of time, made sharp and sweet 1115
 With multitudinous days and nights and tears

And many mixing savours of strange years,
Were no more trodden of them under feet,
Cast out and spilt about their holy places:
That life were given them as a fruit to eat 1120
And death to drink as water; that the light
Might ebb, drawn backward from their eyes, and night
Hide for one hour the imperishable faces.
That they might rise up sad in heaven, and know
Sorrow and sleep, one paler than young snow, 1125
One cold as blight of dew and ruinous rain;
Rise up and rest and suffer a little, and be
Awhile as all things born with us and we,
And grieve as men, and like slain men be slain.

For now we know not of them; but one saith 1130
The gods are gracious, praising God; and one,
When hast thou seen? or hast thou felt his breath
Touch, nor consume thine eyelids as the sun,
Nor fill thee to the lips with fiery death?
None hath beheld him, none 1135
Seen above other gods and shapes of things,
Swift without feet and flying without wings,
Intolerable, not clad with death or life,
Insatiable, not known of night or day,
The lord of love and loathing and of strife 1140
Who gives a star and takes a sun away;
Who shapes the soul, and makes her a barren wife
To the earthly body and grievous growth of clay;
Who turns the large limbs to a little flame
And binds the great sea with a little sand; 1145
Who makes desire, and slays desire with shame;
Who shakes the heaven as ashes in his hand;

Who, seeing the light and shadow for the same,
 Bids day waste night as fire devours a brand,
 Smites without sword, and scourges without rod; 1150
 The supreme evil, God.

Yea, with thine hate, O God, thou hast covered us,
 One saith, and hidden our eyes away from sight,
 And made us transitory and hazardous,
 Light things and slight; 1155

Yet men have praised thee, saying, He hath made man
 thus,
 And he doeth right.

Thou hast kissed us, and hast smitten; thou hast laid
 Upon us with thy left hand life, and said,
 Live: and again thou hast said, Yield up your breath, 1160
 And with thy right hand laid upon us death.

Thou hast sent us sleep, and stricken sleep with dreams,
 Saying, Joy is not, but love of joy shall be;
 Thou hast made sweet springs for all the pleasant streams,
 In the end thou has made them bitter with the sea. 1165

Thou hast fed one rose with dust of many men;
 Thou hast marred one face with fire of many tears;
 Thou hast taken love, and given us sorrow again;
 With pain thou hast filled us full to the eyes and ears.

Therefore, because thou art strong, our father, and we 1170
 Feeble; and thou art against us, and thine hand
 Constrains us in the shallows of the sea

And breaks us at the limits of the land;
 Because thou hast bent thy lightnings as a bow,
 And loosed the hours like arrows; and let fall 1175

Sins and wild words and many a wingèd woe
 And wars among us, and one end of all;
 Because thou hast made the thunder, and thy feet
 Are as a rushing water when the skies

Break, but thy face as an exceeding heat 1180
And flames of fire the eyelids of thine eyes;
Because thou art over all who are over us;
Because thy name is life and our name death;
Because thou art cruel and men are piteous,
And our hands labour and thine hand scattereth; 1185
Lo, with hearts rent and knees made tremulous,
Lo, with ephemeral lips and casual breath,
At least we witness of thee ere we die
That these things are not otherwise, but thus;
That each man in his heart sigheth, and saith, 1190
That all men even as I,
All we are against thee, against thee, O God most high.

But ye, keep ye on earth
Your lips from over-speech,
Loud words and longing are so little worth; 1195
And the end is hard to reach.
For silence after grievous things is good,
And reverence, and the fear that makes men whole,
And shame, and righteous governance of blood,
And lordship of the soul. 1200
But from sharp words and wits men pluck no fruit,
And gathering thorns they shake the tree at root;
For words divide and rend;
But silence is most noble till the end.

ALTHÆA

I heard within the house a cry of news 1205
And came forth eastward hither, where the dawn
Cheers first these warder gods that face the sun
And next our eyes unrisen; for unaware

Came clashes of swift hoofs and trampling feet
 And through the windy pillared corridor 1210
 Light sharper than the frequent flames of day
 That daily fill it from the fiery dawn;
 Gleams, and a thunder of people that cried out,
 And dust and hurrying horsemen; lo their chief,
 That rode with Æneus rein by rein, returned. 1215
 What cheer, O herald of my lord the king?

HERALD

Lady, good cheer and great; the boar is slain.

CHORUS

Praised be all gods that look toward Calydon.

ALTHÆA

Good news and brief; but by whose happier hand?

HERALD

A maiden's and a prophet's and thy son's. 1220

ALTHÆA

Well fare the spear that severed him and life.

HERALD

Thine own, and not an alien, hast thou blest.

ALTHÆA

Twice be thou too for my sake blest and his.

HERALD

At the king's word I rode afoam for thine.

ALTHÆA

Thou sayest he tarrieth till they bring the spoil? 1225

HERALD

Hard by the quarry, where they breathe, O queen.

ALTHÆA

Speak thou their chance; but some bring flowers and crown
These gods and all the lintel, and shed wine,
Fetch sacrifice and slay; for heaven is good.

HERALD

Some furlongs northward where the brakes begin 1230
West of that narrowing range of warrior hills
Whose brooks have bled with battle when thy son
Smote Acarnania, there all they made halt,
And with keen eye took note of speak and hound,
Royally ranked; Laertes island-born, 1235
The young Gerenian Nestor, Panopeus,
And Cepheus and Ancæus, mightiest thewed,
Arcadians; next, and evil-eyed of these,
Arcadian Atalanta, with twain hounds
Lengthening the leash, and under nose and brow 1240
Glittering with lipless tooth and fire-swift eye;
But from her white braced shoulder the plumed shafts
Rang, and the bow shone from her side; next her
Meleager, like a sun in spring that strikes

Branch into leaf and bloom into the world, 1245
 A glory among men meaner; Iphicles,
 And following him that slew the biform bull
 Pirithous, and divine Eurytion,
 And, bride-bound to the gods, Æacides.
 Then Telamon his brother, and Argive-born 1250
 The seer and sayer of visions and of truth,
 Amphiaraus; and a four-fold strength,
 Thine, even thy mother's and thy sister's sons.
 And recent from the roar of foreign foam
 Jason, and Dryas twin-begot with war, 1255
 A blossom of bright battle, sword and man
 Shining; and Idas, and the keenest eye
 Of Lynceus, and Admetus twice-espoused,
 And Hippasus and Hyleus, great in heart.
 These having halted bade blow horns, and rode 1260
 Through woods and waste lands cleft by stormy streams,
 Past yew-trees and the heavy hair of pines,
 And where the dew is thickest under oaks,
 This way and that; but questing up and down
 They saw no trail nor scented; and one said, 1265
 Plexippus, Help, or help not, Artemis,
 And we will flay thy boarskin with male hands;
 But saying, he ceased and said not that he would
 Seeing where the green ooze of a sun-struck marsh
 Shook with a thousand reeds untunable, 1270
 And in their moist and multitudinous flower
 Slept no soft sleep, with violent visions fed,
 The blind bulk of the immeasurable beast.
 And seeing, he shuddered with sharp lust of praise
 Through all his limbs, and launched a double dart, 1275
 And missed; for much desire divided him,

Too hot of spirit and feebler than his will,
That his hand failed, though fervent; and the shaft,
Sundering the rushes, in a tamarisk stem
Shook, and stuck fast; then all abode save one, 1280
The Arcadian Atalanta; from her side
Sprang her hounds, labouring at the leash, and slipped,
And plashed ear-deep with plunging feet; but she
Saying, Speed it as I send it for thy sake,
Goddess, drew bow and loosed; the sudden string 1285
Rang, and sprang inward, and the waterish air
Hissed, and the moist plumes of the songless reeds
Moved as a wave which the wind moves no more.
But the boar heaved half out of ooze and slime
His tense flank trembling round the barbèd wound, 1290
Hateful; and fiery with invasive eyes
And bristling with intolerable hair
Plunged, and the hounds clung, and green flowers and
white
Reddened and broke all round them where they came.
And charging with sheer tusk he drove, and smote 1295
Hyleus; and sharp death caught his sudden soul,
And violent sleep shed night upon his eyes.
Then Peleus, with strong strain of hand and heart,
Shot; but the sidelong arrow slid, and slew
His comrade born and loving countryman, 1300
Under the left arm smitten, as he no less
Poised a like arrow; and bright blood brake afoam,
And falling, and weighed back by clamorous arms,
Sharp rang the dead limbs of Eurytion.
Then one shot happier, the Cadmean seer, 1305
Amphiaraus; for his sacred shaft
Pierced the red circlet of one ravening eye
Beneath the brute brows of the sanguine boar,

Now bloodier from one slain; but he so galled
 Sprang straight, and rearing cried no lesser cry 1310
 Than thunder and the roar of wintering streams
 That mix their own foam with the yellower sea;
 And as a tower that falls by fire in fight
 With ruin of walls and all its archery,
 And breaks the iron flower of war beneath, 1315
 Crushing charred limbs and molten arms of men;
 So through crushed branches and the reddening brake
 Clamoured and crashed the fervour of his feet,
 And trampled, springing sideways from the tusk,
 Too tardy a moving mould of heavy strength, 1320
 Ancæus; and as flakes of weak-winged snow
 Break, all the hard thews of his heaving limbs
 Broke, and rent flesh fell every way, and blood
 Flew, and fierce fragments of no more a man.
 Then all the heroes drew sharp breath, and gazed, 1325
 And smote not; but Meleager, but thy son,
 Right in the wild way of the coming curse
 Rock-rooted, fair with fierce and fastened lips,
 Clear eyes, and springing muscle and shortening limb—
 With chin aslant indrawn to a tightening throat, 1330
 Grave, and with gathered sinews, like a god,—
 Aimed on the left side his well-handled spear
 Grapsed where the ash was knottiest hewn, and smote,
 And with no missile wound, the monstrous boar
 Right in the hairiest hollow of his hide 1335
 Under the last rib, sheer through bulk and bone,
 Deep in; and deeply smitten, and to death,
 The heavy horror with his hanging shafts
 Leapt, and fell furiously, and from raging lips
 Foamed out the latest wrath of all his life. 1340

And all they praised the gods with mightier heart,
Zeus and all gods, but chieftiest Artemis,
Seeing; but Meleager bade whet knives and flay,
Strip and stretch out the splendour of the spoil;
And hot and horrid from the work all these 1345
Sat, and drew breath and drank and made great cheer
And washed the hard sweat off their calmer brows.
For much sweet grass grew higher than grew the reed,
And good for slumber, and every holier herb,
Narcissus, and the low-lying melilote, 1350
And all of goodliest blade and bloom that springs
Where, hid by heavier hyacinth, violet buds
Blossom and burn; and fire of yellower flowers
And light of crescent lilies, and such leaves
As fear the Faun's and know the Dryad's foot; 1355
Olive and ivy and poplar dedicate,
And many a well-spring overwatched of these.
There now they rest; but me the king bade bear
Good tidings to rejoice this town and thee.
Wherefore be glad, and all ye give much thanks, 1360
For fallen is all the trouble of Calydon.

ALTHÆA

Laud ye the gods; for this they have given is good,
And what shall be they hide until their time.
Much good and somewhat grievous hast thou said,
And either well; but let all sad things be, 1365
Till all have made before the prosperous gods
Burnt-offering, and poured out the floral wine.
Look fair, O gods, and favourable; for we
Praise you with no false heart or flattering mouth,
Being merciful, but with pure souls and prayer. 1370

HERALD

Thou hast prayed well; for whoso fears not these,
 But once being prosperous waxes huge of heart,
 Him shall some new thing unaware destroy.

CHORUS

O that I now, I too were	
By deep wells and water-floods,	1375
Streams of ancient hills, and where	
All the wan green places bear	
Blossoms cleaving to the sod,	
Fruitless fruit, and grasses fair,	
Or such darkest ivy-buds	1380
As divide thy yellow hair,	
Bacchus, and their leaves that nod	
Round thy fawnskin brush the bare	
Snow-soft shoulders of a god;	
There the year is sweet, and there	1385
Earth is full of secret springs,	
And the fervent rose-cheeked hours,	
Those that marry dawn and noon,	
There are sunless, there look pale	
In dim leaves and hidden air,	1390
Pale as grass or latter flowers	
Or the wild vine's wan wet rings	
Full of dew beneath the moon,	
And all day the nightingale	
Sleeps, and all night sings;	1395
There in cold remote recesses	
That nor alien eyes assail,	
Feet, nor imminence of wings,	

Nor a wind nor any tune,
Thou, O queen and holiest, 1400
Flower the whitest of all things;
With reluctant lengthening tresses
And with sudden splendid breast
Save of maidens un beholden,
There are wont to enter, there 1405
Thy divine swift limbs and golden
Maiden growth of unbound hair,
Bathed in waters white,
Shine, and many a maid's by thee
In moist woodland or the hilly 1410
Flowerless brakes where wells abound
Out of all men's sight;
Or in lower pools that see
All their margins clothed all round
With the innumerable lily, 1415
Whence the golden-girdled bee
Flits through flowering rush to fret
White or duskier violet,
Fair as those that in far years
With their buds left luminous 1420
And their little leaves made wet,
From the warmer dew of tears,
Mother's tears in extreme need,
Hid the limbs of Iamus,
Of thy brother's seed; 1425
For his heart was piteous
Toward him, even as thine heart now
Pitiful toward us;
Thine, O goddess, turning hither
A benignant blameless brow; 1430

Seeing enough of evil done
 And lives withered as leaves wither
 In the blasting of the sun;
 Seeing enough of hunters dead,
 Ruin enough of all our year, 1435
 Herds and harvests slain and shed,
 Herdsmen stricken many an one,
 Fruits and flocks consumed together,
 And great length of deadly days.
 Yet with reverent lips and fear 1440
 Turn we toward thee, turn and praise
 For this lightening of clear weather
 And prosperities begun.
 For not seldom, when all air
 As bright water without breath 1445
 Shines, and when men fear not, fate
 Without thunder unaware
 Breaks, and brings down death.
 Joy with grief ye great gods give,
 Good with bad, and overbear 1450
 All the pride of us that live,
 All the high estate,
 As ye long since overbore,
 As in old time long before,
 Many a strong man and a great, 1455
 All that were.
 But do thou, sweet, otherwise,
 Having heed of all our prayer,
 Taking note of all our sighs;
 We beseech thee by thy light, 1460
 By thy bow, and thy sweet eyes,
 And the kingdom of the night,

Be thou favourable and fair;
By thine arrows and thy might
And Orion overthrown; 1465
By the maiden thy delight,
By the indissoluble zone
And the sacred hair.

MESSENGER

Maidens, if ye will sing now, shift your song,
Bow down, cry, wail for pity; is this a time 1470
For singing? nay, for strewing of dust and ash,
Rent raiment, and for bruising of the breast.

CHORUS

What new thing wolf-like lurks behind thy words?
What snake's tongue in thy lips? what fire in the eyes?

MESSENGER

Bring me before the queen and I will speak. 1475

CHORUS

Lo, she comes forth as from thank-offering made.

MESSENGER

A barren offering for a bitter gift.

ALTHÆA

What are these borne on branches, and the face
Covered? no mean men living, but now slain
Such honour have they, if any dwell with death. 1480

MESSENGER

Queen, thy twain brethren and thy mother's sons.

ALTHÆA

Lay down your dead till I behold their blood
If it be mine indeed, and I will weep.

MESSENGER

Weep if thou wilt, for these men shall no more.

ALTHÆA

O brethren, O my father's sons, of me	1485
Well loved and well reputed, I should weep	
Tears dearer than the dear blood drawn from you	
But that I know you not uncomforted,	
Sleeping no shameful sleep, however slain,	
For my son surely hath avenged you dead.	1490

MESSENGER

Nay, should thine own seed slay himself, O queen?

ALTHÆA

Thy double word brings forth a double death.

MESSENGER

Know this then singly, by one hand they fell.

ALTHÆA

What mutterest thou with thine ambiguous mouth?

MESSENGER

Slain by thy son's hand; is that saying so hard? 1495

ALTHÆA

Our time is come upon us: it is here.

CHORUS

O miserable, and spoiled at thine own hand.

ALTHÆA

Wert thou not called Meleager from this womb?

CHORUS

A grievous huntsman hath it bred to thee.

ALTHÆA

Wert thou born fire, and shalt thou not devour? 1500

CHORUS

The fire thou madest, will it consume even thee?

ALTHÆA

My dreams are fallen upon me; burn thou too. /

CHORUS

Not without God are visions born and die.

ALTHÆA

The gods are many about me; I am one.

CHORUS

She groaned as men wrestling with heavier gods. 1505

ALTHÆA

They rend me, they divide me, they destroy. ✂

CHORUS

Or one labouring in travail of strange births.

ALTHÆA

They are strong, they are strong; I am broken, and these
prevail.

CHORUS

The god is great against her; she will die.

ALTHÆA

Yea but not now; for my heart too is great. 1510
I would I were not here in sight of the sun.
But thou, speak all thou sawest, and I will die.

MESSENGER

O queen, for queenlike hast thou borne thyself,
A little word may hold so great mischance.
For in division of the sanguine spoil 1515
These men thy brethren wrangling bade yield up
The boar's head and the horror of the hide
That this might stand a wonder in Calydon,
Hallowed; and some drew toward them; but thy son
With great hands grasping all that weight of hair 1520
Cast down the dead heap clanging and collapsed

At female feet, saying This thy spoil not mine,
Maiden, thine own hand for thyself hath reaped,
And all this praise God gives thee: she thereat
Laughed, as when dawn touches the sacred night 1525
The sky sees laugh and redden and divide
Dim lips and eyelids virgin of the sun,
Hers, and the warm slow breasts of morning heave,
Fruitful, and flushed with flame from lamp-lit hours,
And maiden undulation of clear hair 1530
Colour the clouds; so laughed she from pure heart,
Lit with a low blush to the braided hair,
And rose-coloured and cold like very dawn,
Golden and godlike, chastely with chaste lips,
A faint grave laugh; and all they held their peace, 1535
And she passed by them. Then one cried Lo now,
Shall not the Arcadian shoot out lips at us,
Saying all we were despoiled by this one girl?
And all they rode against her violently
And cast the fresh crown from her hair, and now 1540
They had rent her spoil away, dishonouring her,
Save that Meleager, as a tame lion chafed,
Bore on them, broke them, and as fire cleaves wood
So clove and drove them, smitten in twain; but she
Smote not nor heaved up hand; and this man first, 1545
Plexippus, crying out This for love's sake, sweet,
Drove at Meleager, who with spear straightening
Pierced his cheek through; then Toxeus made for him,
Dumb, but his spear spake; vain and violent words, X
Fruitless; for him too stricken through both sides 1550
The earth felt falling, and his horse's foam
Blanched thy son's face, his slayer; and these being slain,
None moved nor spake; but Æneus bade bear hence

These made of heaven infatuate in their deaths,
 Foolish; for these would baffle fate, and fell. 1555
 And they passed on, and all men honoured her,
 Being honourable, as one revered of heaven.

ALTHÆA

What say you, women? is all this not well done?

CHORUS

No man doth well but God hath part in him.

ALTHÆA

But no part here; for these my brethren born 1560
 Ye have no part in, these ye know not of
 As I that was their sister, a sacrifice
 Slain in their slaying. I would I had died for these;
 For this man dead walked with me, child by child,
 And made a weak staff for my feebler feet 1565
 With his own tender wrist and hand, and held
 And led me softly and shewed me gold and steel
 And shining shapes of mirror and bright crown
 And all things fair; and threw light spears, and brought
 Young hounds to huddle at my feet and thrust 1570
 Tame heads against my little maiden breasts
 And please me with great eyes; and those days went
 And these are bitter and I a barren queen
 And sister miserable, a grievous thing
 And mother of many curses; and she too, 1575
 My sister Leda, sitting overseas
 With fair fruits round her, and her faultless lord,
 Shall curse me, saying A sorrow and not a son,

Sister, thou barest, even a burning fire,
A brand consuming thine own soul and me. 1580
But ye now, sons of Thestius, make good cheer,
For ye shall have such wood to funeral fire
As no king hath; and flame that once burnt down
Oil shall not quicken or breath relume or wine
Refresh again; much costlier than fine gold, 1585
And more than many lives of wandering men.

CHORUS

O queen, thou hast yet with thee love-worthy things,
Thine husband, and the great strength of thy son.

ALTHÆA

Who shall get brothers for me while I live?
Who bear them? who bring forth in lieu of these? 1590
Are not our fathers and our brethren one,
And no man like them? are not mine here slain?
Have we not hung together, he and I,
Flowerwise feeding as the feeding bees,
With mother-milk for honey? and this man too, 1595
Dead, with my son's spear thrust between his sides,
Hath he not seen us, later born than he,
Laugh with lips filled, and laughed again for love?
There were no sons then in the world, nor spears,
Nor deadly births of women; but the gods 1600
Allowed us, and our days were clear of these.
I would I had died unwedded, and brought forth
No swords to vex the world; for these that spake
Sweet words long since and loved me will not speak
Nor love nor look upon me; and all my life 1605

I shall not hear or see them living men.
 But I too living, how shall I now live?
 What life shall this be with my son, to know
 What hath been and desire what will not be,
 Look for dead eyes and listen for dead lips, 1610
 And kill mine own heart with remembering them,
 And with those eyes that see their slayer alive
 Weep, and wring hands that clasp him by the hand?
 How shall I bear my dreams of them, to hear
 False voices, feel the kisses of false mouths 1615
 And footless sound of perished feet, and then
 Wake and hear only it may be their own hounds
 Whine masterless in miserable sleep,
 And see their boar-spears and their beds and seats
 And all the gear and housings of their lives 1620
 And not the men? shall hounds and horses mourn,
 Pine with strange eyes, and prick up hungry ears,
 Famish and fail at heart for their dear lords,
 And I not heed at all? and those blind things
 Fall off from life for love's sake, and I live? 1625
 Surely some death is better than some life,
 Better one death for him and these and me.
 For if the gods had slain them it may be
 I had endured it; if they had fallen by war
 Or by the nets and knives of privy death 1630
 And by hired hands while sleeping, this thing too
 I had set my soul to suffer; or this hunt,
 Had this despatched them, under tusk or tooth
 Torn, sanguine, trodden, broken; for all deaths
 Or honourable or with facile feet avenged 1635
 And hands of swift gods following, all save this,
 Are bearable; but not for their sweet land

Fighting, but not a sacrifice, lo these
Dead; for I had not then shed all mine heart
Out at mine eyes: then either with good speed, 1640
Being just, I had slain their slayer atoningly,
Or strewn with flowers their fire and on their tombs
Hung crowns, and over them a song, and seen
Their praise outflame their ashes: for all men,
All maidens, had come thither, and from pure lips 1645
Shed songs upon them, from heroic eyes
Tears; and their death had been a deathless life;
But now, by no man hired nor alien sword,
By their own kindred are they fallen, in peace,
After much peril, friendless among friends, 1650
By hateful hands they loved; and how shall mine
Touch these returning red and not from war,
These fatal from the vintage of men's veins,
Dead men my brethren? how shall these wash off
No festal stains of undelightful wine, 1655
How mix the blood, my blood on them, with me,
Holding mine hand? or how shall I say, son,
That am no sister? but by night and day
Shall we not sit and hate each other, and think
Things hate-worthy? not live with shamefast eyes, 1660
Brow-beaten, treading soft with fearful feet,
Each unupbraided, each without rebuke
Convicted, and without a word reviled
Each of another? and I shall let thee live
And see thee strong and hear men for thy sake 1665
Praise me, but these thou wouldest not let live
No man shall praise for ever? these shall lie
Dead, unbeloved, unholpen, all through thee?
Sweet were they toward me living, and mine heart

Desired them, but was then well satisfied, 1670
 That now is as men hungered; and these dead
 I shall want always to the day I die.
 For all things else and all men may renew;
 Yea, son for son the gods may give and take,
 But never a brother or sister any more. 1675

CHORUS

Nay, for the son lies close about thine heart,
 Full of thy milk, warm from thy womb, and drains
 Life and the blood of life and all thy fruit,
 Eats thee and drinks thee as who breaks bread and eats,
 Treads wine and drinks, thyself, a sect of thee; 1680
 And if he feed not, shall not thy flesh faint?
 Or drink not, are not thy lips dead for thirst?
 This thing moves more than all things, even thy son,
 That thou cleave to him; and he shall honour thee,
 Thy womb that bare him and the breasts he knew, 1685
 Reverencing most for thy sake all his gods.

ALTHÆA

But these the gods too gave me, and these my son,
 Not reverencing his gods nor mine own heart
 Nor the old sweet years nor all venerable things,
 But cruel, and in his raving like a beast, 1690
 Hath taken away to slay them: yea, and she,
 She the strange woman, she the flower, the sword,
 Red from spilt blood, a mortal flower to men,
 Adorable, detestable—even she
 Saw with strange eyes and with strange lips rejoiced, 1695
 Seeing these mine own slain of mine own, and me

Made miserable above all miseries made,
A grief among all women in the world,
A name to be washed out with all men's tears.

CHORUS

Strengthen thy spirit; is this not also a god, 1700
Chance, and the wheel of all necessities?
Hard things have fallen upon us from harsh gods, ⁱ
Whom lest worse hap rebuke we not for these.

ALTHÆA

My spirit is strong against itself, and I
For these things' sake cry out on mine own soul 1705
That it endures outrage, and dolorous days,
And life, and this inexpiable impotence.
Weak am I, weak and shameful; my breath drawn
Shames me, and monstrous things and violent gods.
What shall atone? what heal me? what bring back 1710
Strength to the foot, light to the face? what herb
Assuage me? what restore me? what release?
What strange thing eaten or drunken, O great gods,
Make me as you or as the beasts that feed,
Slay and divide and cherish their own hearts? 1715
For these ye show us; and we less than these
Have not wherewith to live as all these things
Which all their lives fare after their own kind
As who doth well rejoicing; but we ill,
Weeping or laughing, we whom eyesight fails, 1720
Knowledge and light of face and perfect hearts,
And hands we lack, and wit; and all our days
Sin, and have hunger, and die infatuated.

For madness have ye given us and not health,
 And sins whereof we know not; and for these 1725
 Death, and sudden destruction unaware.
 What shall we say now? what thing comes of us?

CHORUS

Alas, for all this all men undergo.

ALTHÆA

Wherefore I will not that these twain, O gods,
 Die as a dog dies, eaten of creeping things, 1730
 Abominable, a loathing; but though dead
 Shall they have honour and such funereal flame
 As strews men's ashes in their enemies' face
 And blinds their eyes who hate them: lest men say,
 "Lo how they lie, and living had great kin, 1735
 And none of these hath pity of them, and none
 Regards them lying, and none is wrung at heart,
 None moved in spirit for them, naked and slain,
 Abhorred, abased, and no tears comfort them:"
 And in the dark this grieve Eurythemis, 1740
 Hearing how these her sons come down to her
 Unburied, unavenged, as kinless men,
 And had a queen their sister. That were shame
 Worse than this grief. Yet how to atone at all
 I know not; seeing the love of my born son, 1745
 A new-made mother's new-born love, that grows
 From the soft child to the strong man, now soft
 Now strong as either, and still one sole same love,
 Strives with me, no light thing to strive withal;
 This love is deep, and natural to man's blood, 1750

And ineffaceable with many tears.
Yet shall not these rebuke me though I die,
Nor she in that waste world with all her dead,
My mother, among the pale flocks fallen as leaves,
Folds of dead people, and alien from the sun; 1755
Nor lack some bitter comfort, some poor praise,
Being queen, to have borne her daughter like a queen,
Righteous; and though mine own fire burn me too,
She shall have honour and these her sons, though dead.
But all the gods will, all they do, and we 1760
Not all we would, yet somewhat; and one choice
We have, to live and do just deeds and die.

CHORUS

Terrible words she communes with, and turns
Swift fiery eyes in doubt against herself,
And murmurs as who talks in dreams with death. 1765

ALTHÆA

For the unjust also dieth, and him all men
Hate, and himself abhors the unrighteousness,
And seeth his own dishonour intolerable.
But I being just, doing right upon myself,
Slay mine own soul, and no man born shames me. 1770
For none constrains nor shall rebuke, being done,
What none compelled me doing; thus these things fare.
Ah, ah, that such things should so fare; ah me,
That I am found to do them and endure,
Chosen and constrained to choose, and bear myself 1775
Mine own wound through mine own flesh to the heart
Violently stricken, a spoiler and a spoil,

A ruin ruinous, fallen on mine own son.

Ah, ah, for me too as for these; alas,

For that is done that shall be, and mine hand 1780

Full of the deed, and full of blood mine eyes,

That shall see never nor touch anything

Save blood unstanch'd and fire unquenchable.

CHORUS

What wilt thou do? what ails thee? for the house

Shakes ruinously; wilt thou bring fire for it? 1785

ALTHÆA

Fire in the roofs, and on the lintels fire.

Lo ye, who stand and weave between the doors,

There; and blood drips from hand and thread, and stains

Threshold and raiment and me passing in

Flecked with the sudden sanguine drops of death. 1790

CHORUS

Alas that time is stronger than strong men,

Fate than all gods: and these are fallen on us.

ALTHÆA

A little since and I was glad; and now

I never shall be glad or sad again.

CHORUS

Between two joys a grief grows unaware. 1795

ALTHÆA

A little while and I shall laugh; and then

I shall weep never and laugh not any more.

CHORUS

What shall be said? for words are thorns to grief.
Withhold thyself a little and fear the gods.

ALTHÆA

Fear died when these were slain; and I am as dead, 1800
And fear is of the living; these fear none.

CHORUS

Have pity upon all people for their sake.

ALTHÆA

It is done now; shall I put back my day?

CHORUS

An end is come, an end; this is of God.

ALTHÆA

I am fire, and burn myself; keep clear of fire. 1805

CHORUS

The house is broken, is broken; it shall not stand.

ALTHÆA

Woe, woe for him that breaketh; and a rod /
Smote it of old, and now the axe is here.

CHORUS

Not as with sundering of the earth
Nor as with cleaving of the sea 1810

Nor fierce foreshadowings of a birth
 Nor flying dreams of death to be
 Nor loosening of the large world's girth
 And quickening of the body of night,
 And sound of thunder in men's ears 1815
 And fire of lightning in men's sight,
 Fate, mother of desires and fears,
 Bore unto men the law of tears;
 But sudden, an unfathered flame,
 And broken out of night, she shone, 1820
 She, without body, without name,
 In days forgotten and foregone;
 And heaven rang round her as she came
 Like smitten cymbals and lay bare;
 Clouds and great stars, thunders and snows, 1825
 The blue sad fields and folds of air,
 The life that breathes, the life that grows,
 All wind, all fire, that burns or blows,
 Even all these knew her: for she is great;
 The daughter of doom, the mother of death, 1830
 The sister of sorrow; a lifelong weight
 That no man's finger lighteneth,
 Nor any god can lighten fate;
 A landmark seen across the way
 Where one race treads as the other trod; 1835
 An evil sceptre, an evil stay,
 Wrought for a staff, wrought for a rod,
 The bitter jealousy of God.
 V | For death is deep as the sea,
 And fate as the waves thereof. | 1840
 Shall the waves take pity on thee
 Or the southwind offer thee love?

Wilt thou take the night for thy day
Or the darkness for light on thy way,
Till thou say in thine heart Enough? 1845
Behold, thou art over fair, thou art over wise;
The sweetness of spring in thine hair, and the light in thine
eyes.
The light of the spring in thine eyes, and the sound in thine
ears;
Yet thine heart shall wax heavy with sighs and thine eye-
lids with tears. 1849
Wilt thou cover thine hair with gold, and with silver thy
feet?
Hast thou taken the purple to fold thee, and made thy
mouth sweet?
Behold, when thy face is made bare, he that loved thee
shall hate;
Thy face shall be no more fair at the fall of thy fate.
For thy life shall fall as a leaf and be shed as the rain;
And the veil of thine head shall be grief; and the crown
shall be pain. 1855

ALTHÆA

Ho, ye that wail, and ye that sing, make way
Till I be come among you. Hide your tears,
Ye little weepers, and your laughing lips,
Ye laughers for a little; lo mine eyes
That outweep heaven at rainiest, and my mouth 1860
That laughs as gods laugh at us. Fate's are we,
Yet fate is ours a breathing-space; yea, mine,
Fate is made mine for ever; he is my son,
My bedfellow, my brother. You strong gods,
Give place unto me; I am as any of you, 1865
To give life and to take life. Thou, old earth,
That hast made man and unmade; thou whose mouth

Looks red from the eaten fruits of thine own womb;
Behold me with what lips upon what food
I feed and fill my body; even with flesh 1870
Made of my body. Lo, the fire I lit
I burn with fire to quench it; yea, with flame
I burn up even the dust and ash thereof.

CHORUS

Woman, what fire is this thou burnest with?

ALTHÆA

Yea to the bone, yea to the blood and all. 1875

CHORUS

For this thy face and hair are as one fire.

ALTHÆA

A tongue that licks and beats upon the dust.

CHORUS

And in thine eyes are hollow light and heat.

ALTHÆA

Of flame not fed with hand or frankincense.

CHORUS

I fear thee for the trembling of thine eyes. 1880

ALTHÆA

Neither with love thy tremble nor for fear.

CHORUS

And thy mouth shuddering like a shot bird.

ALTHÆA

Not as the bride's mouth when man kisses it.

CHORUS

Nay, but what thing is this thing thou hast done?

ALTHÆA

Look, I am silent, speak your eyes for me. 1885

CHORUS

I see a faint fire lightening from the hall.

ALTHÆA

Gaze, stretch your eyes, strain till the lids drop off.

CHORUS

Flushed pillars down the flickering vestibule.

ALTHÆA

Stretch with your necks like birds: cry, chirp as they.

CHORUS

And a long brand that blackens: and white dust. 1890

ALTHÆA

O children, what is this ye see? your eyes
Are blinder than night's face at fall of moon.
That is my son, my flesh, my fruit of life,
My travail, and the year's weight of my womb,
Meleager, a fire enkindled of mine hands 1895
And of mine hands extinguished; this is he.

CHORUS

O gods, what word has flown out at thy mouth?

ALTHÆA

I did this and I say this and I die.

CHORUS

Death stands upon the doorway of thy lips,
And in thy mouth has death set up in his house. 1900

ALTHÆA

O death, a little, a little while, sweet death,
Until I see the brand burnt down and die.

CHORUS

She reels as any reed under the wind,
And cleaves unto the ground with staggering feet.

ALTHÆA

Girls, one thing will I say and hold my peace. 1905
I that did this will weep not nor cry out,
Cry ye and weep: I will not call on gods,
Call ye on them; I will not pity man,
Shew ye your pity. I know not if I live;
Save that I feel the fire upon my face 1910
And on my cheek the burning of a brand.
Yea the smoke bites me, yea I drink the steam
With nostril and with eyelid and with lip
Insatiate and intolerant; and mine hands
Burn, and fire feeds upon mine eyes; I reel 1915
As one made drunk with living, whence he draws
Drunken delight; yet I, though mad for joy,
Loathe my long living and am waxen red
As with the shadow of shed blood; behold,
I am kindled with the flames that fade in him, 1920
I am swollen with subsiding of his veins,
I am flooded with his ebbing; my lit eyes
Flame with the falling fire that leaves his lids
Bloodless; my cheek is luminous with blood
Because his face is ashen. Yet, O child, 1925
Son, first-born, fairest—O sweet mouth, sweet eyes,
That drew my life out through my suckling breast,
That shone and clove mine heart through—O soft knees
Clinging, O tender treadings of soft feet,
Cheeks warm with little kissings—O child, child, 1930
What have we made each other? Lo, I felt
Thy weight cleave to me, a burden of beauty, O son,
Thy cradled brows and loveliest loving lips,
The floral hair, the little lightening eyes,

And all thy goodly glory; with mine hands 1935
 Delicately I fed thee, with my tongue
 Tenderly spake, saying, Verily in God's time,
 For all the little likeness of thy limbs,
 Son, I shall make thee a kingly man to fight,
 A lordly leader; and hear before I die, 1940
 "She bore the goodliest sword of all the world."
 Oh! oh! For all my life turns round on me;
 I am severed from myself, my name is gone,
 My name that was a healing, it is changed,
 My name is a consuming. From this time, 1945
 Though mine eyes reach to the end of all these things,
 My lips shall not unfasten till I die.

SEMICHORUS

She has filled with sighing the city
 And the ways thereof with tears;
 She arose, she girdled her sides, 1950
 She set her face as a bride's;
 She wept, and she had no pity;
 Trembled and felt no fears.

SEMICHORUS

Her eyes were clear as the sun,
 Her brows were fresh as the day; 1955
 She girdled herself with gold,
 Her robes were manifold;
 But the days of her worship are done,
 Her praise is taken away.

SEMICHORUS

For she set her hand to the fire, 1960
With her mouth she kindled the same;
As the mouth of a flute-player,
So was the mouth of her;
With the might of her strong desire
She blew the breath of the flame. 1965

SEMICHORUS

She set her hand to the wood,
She took the fire in her hand;
As one who is nigh to death,
She panted with strange breath;
She opened her lips unto blood, 1970
She breathed and kindled the brand.

SEMICHORUS

As a wood-dove newly shot,
She sobbed and lifted her breast;
She sighed and covered her eyes,
Filling her lips with sighs; 1975
She sighed, she withdrew herself not,
She refrained not, taking not rest;

SEMICHORUS

But as the wind which is drouth,
And as the air which is death,
As storm that severeth ships, 1980
Her breath severing her lips,
The breath came forth of her mouth
And the fire came forth of her breath.

SECOND MESSENGER

Queen, and you maidens, there is come on us
A thing more deadly than the face of death; 1985
Meleager the good lord is as one slain.

SEMICHORUS

Without sword, without sword is he stricken;
Slain, and slain without hand.

SECOND MESSENGER

For as keen ice divided of the sun
His limbs divide, and as thawed snow the flesh 1990
Thaws from off all his body to the hair.

SEMICHORUS

He wastes as the embers quicken;
With the brand he fades as a brand.

SECOND MESSENGER

Even while they sang and all drew hither and he
Lifted both hands to crown the Arcadian's hair 1995
And fixed the looser leaves, both hands fell down.

SEMICHORUS

With rending of cheek and of hair
Lament ye, mourn for him, weep.

SECOND MESSENGER

Straightway the crown slid off and smote on earth,
First fallen; and he, grasping his own hair, groaned 2000
And cast his raiment round his face and fell.

SEMICHORUS

Alas for visions that were,
And soothsayings spoken in sleep.

SECOND MESSENGER

But the king twitched his reins in and leapt down
And caught him, crying out twice "O child" and
thrice, 2005
So that men's eyelids thickened with their tears.

SEMICHORUS

Lament with a long lamentation,
Cry, for an end is at hand.

SECOND MESSENGER

O son, he said, son, lift thine eyes, draw breath,
Pity me; but Meleager with sharp lips 2010
Gasped; and his face waxed like as sunburnt grass.

SEMICHORUS

Cry aloud, O thou kingdom, O nation,
O stricken, a ruinous land.

SECOND MESSENGER

Whereat king Œneus, straightening feeble knees,
With feeble hands heaved up a lessening weight, 2015
And laid him sadly in strange hands, and wept.

SEMICHORUS

Thou art smitten, her lord, her desire,
Thy dear blood wasted as rain.

SECOND MESSENGER

And they with tears and rendings of the beard
 Bear hither a breathing body, wept upon 2020
 And lightening at each footfall, sick to death.

SEMICHORUS

Thou madest thy sword as a fire,
 With fire for a sword thou art slain.

SECOND MESSENGER

And lo, the feast turned funeral, and the crowns
 Fallen; and the huntress and the hunter trapped; 2025
 And weeping and changed faces and veiled hair.

MELEAGER

Let your hands meet
 Round the weight of my head;
 Lift ye my feet
 As the feet of the dead; 2030
 For the flesh of my body is molten, the limbs of it molten
 as lead.

CHORUS

O thy luminous face,
 Thine imperious eyes!
 O the grief, O the grace
 As of day when it dies! 2035
 Who is this bending over thee, lord, with tears and sup-
 pression of sighs?

MELEAGER

Is a bride so fair?
Is a maid so meek?
With unchapleted hair,
With unfilleted cheek, 2040
Atalanta, the pure among women, whose name is as blessing to speak.

ATALANTA

I would that with feet
Unsandalled, unshod,
Overbold, overfleet,
I had swum not nor trod 2045
From Arcadia to Calydon northward, a blast of the envy of God.

MELEAGER

Unto each man his fate;
Unto each as he saith
In whose fingers the weight
Of the world is as breath; 2050
Yet I would that in clamour of battle mine hands had laid hold upon death.

CHORUS

Not with cleaving of shields
And their clash in thine ear,
When the lord of fought fields
Breaketh spearshaft from spear, 2055
Thou art broken, our lord, thou art broken, with travail and labour and fear.

MELEAGER

Would God he had found me
 Beneath fresh boughs!
 Would God he had bound me
 Unawares in mine house, 2060
 With light in mine eyes, and songs in my lips, and a crown
 on my brows!

CHORUS

Whence art thou sent from us?
 Whither thy goal?
 How art thou rent from us,
 Thou that wert whole, 2065
 As with severing of eyelids and eyes, as with sundering of
 body and soul!

MELEAGER

My heart is within me
 As an ash in the fire;
 Whosoever hath seen me,
 Without lute, without lyre, 2070
 Shall sing of me grievous things, even things that were ill
 to desire.

CHORUS

Who shall raise thee
 From the house of the dead?
 Or what man praise thee
 That thy praise may be said? 2075
 Alas thy beauty! alas thy body! alas thine head!

MELEAGER

But thou, O mother,
 The dreamer of dreams,

Wilt thou bring forth another
To feel the sun's beams 2080
When I move among shadows a shadow, and wail by
impassable streams?

CENEUS

What thing wilt thou leave me
Now this thing is done?
A man wilt thou give me,
A son for my son, 2085
For the light of mine eyes, the desire of my life, the desir-
able one?

CHORUS

Thou were glad above others,
Yea, fair beyond word;
Thou were glad among mothers;
For each man that heard 2090
Of thee, praise there was added unto thee, as wings to the
feet of a bird.

CENEUS

Who shall give back
Thy face of old years
With travail made black,
Grown grey among fears, 2095
Mother of sorrow, mother of cursing, mother of tears?

MELEAGER

Though thou art as fire
Fed with fuel in vain,
My delight, my desire,
Is more chaste than the rain, 2100

More pure than the dewfall, more holy than stars are that
live without stain.

ATALANTA

I would that as water
My life's blood had thawed,
Or as winter's wan daughter
Leaves lowland and lawn 2105
Spring-stricken, or ever mine eyes had beheld thee made
dark in thy dawn.

CHORUS

When thou dravest the men
Of the chosen of Thrace,
None turned him again
Nor endured he thy face 2110
Clothed round with the blush of the battle, with light
from a terrible place.

ÆNEUS

Thou shouldst die as he dies
For whom none sheddeth tears;
Filling thine eyes
And fulfilling thine ears 2115
With the brilliance of battle, the bloom and the beauty, the
splendour of spears.

CHORUS

In the ears of the world
It is sung, it is told,
And the light thereof hurled
And the noise thereof rolled 2120
From the Acroceraunian snow to the ford of the fleece of
gold.

MELEAGER

Would God ye could carry me
Forth of all these;
Heap sand and bury me
By the Chersonese 2125
Where the thundering Bosphorus answers the thunder of
Pontic seas.

CENEUS

Dost thou mock at our praise
And the singing begun
And the men of strange days
Praising my son 2130
In the folds of the hills of home, high places of Calydon?

MELEAGER

For the dead man no home is;
Ah, better to be
What the flower of the foam is
In fields of the sea, 2135
That the sea-waves might be as my raiment, the gulf-
stream a garment for me.

CHORUS

Who shall seek thee and bring
And restore thee thy day,
When the dove dipt her wing
And the oars won their way 2140
Where the narrowing Symplegades whitened the straits
of Propontis with spray?

MELEAGER

Will ye crown me my tomb
 Or exalt me my name,
 Now my spirits consume,
 Now my flesh is a flame? 2145
 Let the sea slake it once, and men speak of me sleeping to
 praise me or shame.

CHORUS

Turn back now, turn thee,
 As who turns him to wake;
 Though the life in thee burn thee,
 Couldst thou bathe it and slake 2150
 Where the sea-ridge of Helle hangs heavier, and east upon
 west waters break?

MELEAGER

Would the winds blow me back
 Or the waves hurl me home?
 Ah, to touch in the track
 When the pine learnt to roam 2155
 Cold girdles and crowns of the sea-gods, cool blossoms of
 water and foam!

CHORUS

The gods may release
 That they made fast;
 Thy soul shall have ease
 In thy limbs at the last; 2160

But what shall they give thee for life, sweet life that is
overpast?

MELEAGER

Not the life of men's veins,
Not of flesh that conceives;
But the grace that remains,
The fair beauty that cleaves 2165
To the life of the rains in the grasses, the life of the dew
on the leaves.

CHORUS

Thou wert helmsman and chief;
Wilt thou turn in an hour,
Thy limbs to the leaf,
Thy face to the flower, 2170
Thy blood to the water, thy soul to the gods who divide
and devour?

MELEAGER

The years are hungry,
Thy wail all their days;
The gods wax angry
And weary of praise; 2175
And who shall bridle their lips? and who shall straiten
their ways?

CHORUS

The gods guard over us
With sword and with rod;
Weaving shadow to cover us,
Heaping the sod, 2180
That law may fulfil herself wholly, to darken man's face
before God.

MELEAGER

O holy head of Æneus, lo thy son
 \ Guiltless, yet red from alien guilt, yet foul
 With kinship of contaminated lives,
 Lo, for their blood I die; and mine own blood 2185
 For bloodshedding of mine is mixed therewith,
 That death may not discern me from my kin.
 Yet with clean heart I die and faultless hand,
 Not shamefully; thou therefore of thy love
 Salute me, and bid fare among the dead 2190
 Well, as the dead fare; for the best man dead
 Fares sadly; nathless I now faring well
 Pass without fear where nothing is to fear
 Having thy love about me and thy goodwill,
 O father, among dark places and men dead. 2195

ÆNEUS

Child, I salute thee with sad heart and tears,
 And bid thee comfort, being a perfect man
 In fight, and honourable in the house of peace.
 The gods give thee fair wage and dues of death,
 And me brief days and ways to come at thee. 2200

MELEAGER

Pray thou thy days be long before thy death,
 And full of ease and kingdom; seeing in death
 There is no comfort and none aftergrowth,
 Nor shall one thence look up and see day's dawn
 Nor light upon the land whither I go. 2205
 \ Live thou and take thy fill of days and die
 When thy day comes; and make not much of death

Lest ere thy day thou reap an evil thing.
Thou too, the bitter mother and mother-plague
Of this my weary body—thou too, queen, 2210
The source and end, the sower and the scythe,
The rain that ripens and the drought that slays,
The sand that swallows and the spring that feeds,
To make me and unmake me—thou, I say,
Althæa, since my father's ploughshare, drawn 2215
Through fatal seedland of a female field,
Furrowed thy body, whence a wheaten ear
Strong from the sun and fragrant from the rains
I sprang and cleft the closure of thy womb,
Mother, I dying with unforgetful tongue 2220
Hail thee as holy and worship thee as just
Who art unjust and unholy; and with my knees
Would worship, but thy fire and subtlety,
Dissundering them, devour me; for these limbs
Are as light dust and crumbings from mine urn 2225
Before the fire has touched them; and my face
As a dead leaf or dead foot's mark on snow,
And all this body a broken barren tree
That was so strong, and all this flower of life
Disbranched and desecrated miserably, 2230
And minished all that god-like muscle and might
And lesser than a man's: for all my veins
Fail me, and all mine ashen life burns down.
I would thou hadst let me live; but gods averse,
But fortune, and the fiery feet of change, 2235
And time, these would not, these tread out my life,
These and not thou; me too thou hast loved, and I
Thee; but this death was mixed with all my life,
Mine end with my beginning: and this law,

This only, slays me, and not my mother at all. 2240

And let no brother or sister grieve too sore,

Nor melt their hearts out on me with their tears,

Since extreme love and sorrowing overmuch

Vex the great gods, and overloving men

Slay and are slain for love's sake; and this house 2245

Shall bear much better children; why should these

Weep? but in patience let them live their lives

And mine pass by forgotten: thou alone,

Mother, thou sole and only, thou not these,

Keep me in mind a little when I die 2250

Because I was thy first-born; let thy soul

Pity me, pity even me gone hence and dead,

Though thou wert wroth, and though thou bear again

Much happier sons, and all men later born

Exceedingly excel me; yet do thou 2255

Forget not, nor think shame; I was thy son.

Time was I did not shame thee; and time was

I thought to live and make thee honourable

With deeds as great as these men's; but they live,

These, and I die; and what thing should have been 2260

Surely I know not; yet I charge thee, seeing

I am dead already, love me not the less,

Me, O my mother; I charge thee by these gods,

My father's, and that holier breast of thine,

By these that see me dying, and that which nursed, 2265

Love me not less, thy first-born: though grief come,

Grief only, of me, and of all these great joy,

And shall come always to thee; for thou knowest,

O mother, O breasts that bare me, for ye know,

O sweet head of my mother, sacred eyes, 2270

Ye know my soul albeit I sinned, ye know

Albeit I kneel not neither touch thy knees,
But with my lips I kneel, and with my heart
I fall about thy feet and worship thee.
And ye farewell now, all my friends; and ye, 2275
Kinsmen, much younger and glorious more than I,
Sons of my mother's sister; and all farewell
That were in Colchis with me, and bare down
The waves and wars that met us: and though times
Change, and though now I be not anything, 2280
Forget not me among you, what I did
In my good time; for even by all those days,
Those days and this, and your own living souls,
And by the light and luck of you that live,
And by this miserable spoil, and me 2285
Dying, I beseech you, let my name not die.
But thou, dear, touch me with thy rose-like hands,
And fasten up mine eyelids with thy mouth,
A bitter kiss; and grasp me with thine arms,
Printing with heavy lips my light waste flesh, 2290
Made light and thin by heavy-handed fate,
And with thine holy maiden eyes drop dew,
Drop tears for dew upon me who am dead,
Me who have loved thee; seeing without sin done
I am gone down to the empty weary house 2295
Where no flesh is nor beauty nor swift eyes
Nor sound of mouth nor might of hands and feet.
But thou, dear, hide my body with thy veil,
And with thy raiment cover foot and head,
And stretch thyself upon me and touch hands 2300
With hands and lips with lips; be pitiful
As thou art maiden perfect; let no man
Defile me to despise me, saying, This man

Died woman-wise, a woman's offering, slain
 Through female fingers in his woof of life, 2305
 Dishonourable; for thou hast honoured me.
 And now for God's sake kiss me once and twice
 And let me go; for the night gathers me,
 And in the night shall no man gather fruit.

ATALANTA

Hail thou: but I with heavy face and feet 2310
 Turn homeward and am gone out of thine eyes.

CHORUS

Who shall contend with his lords
 Or cross them or do them wrong?
 Who shall bind them as with cords?
 Who shall tame them as with song? 2315
 Who shall smite them as with swords?
 For the hands of their kingdom are strong.

ERECHTHEUS
A TRAGEDY

ὦ τὰ λιπαρὰ καὶ λαστέφανοι καὶ ἀοίδιμοι,
Ἑλλάδος ἔρεισμα, κλειναὶ Ἀθῆναι, δαιμόνιον πτολίεθρον.

PIND. *Fr.* 47.

ΑΤ. τίς δὲ ποιμάνωρ ἔπεστι κάπιδεσπόζει στρατοῦ;

ΧΟ. οὔτινος δοῦλοι κέκληνται φωτὸς οὐδ' ὑπηκόοι.

ÆSCH. *Pers.* 241-2.

TO
MY MOTHER

PERSONS

ERECHTHEUS.

CHORUS OF ATHENIAN ELDERS.

PRAXITHEA.

CHTHONIA.

HERALD OF EUMOLPUS.

MESSENGER.

ATHENIAN HERALD.

ATHENA.

ERECHTHEUS

ERECHTHEUS

MOTHER of life and death and all men's days,
Earth, whom I chief of all men born would bless,
And call thee with more loving lips than theirs
Mother, for of this very body of thine
And living blood I have my breath and live, 5
Behold me, even thy son, me crowned of men,
Me made thy child by that strong cunning God
Who fashions fire and iron, who begat
Me for a sword and beacon-fire on thee,
Me fosterling of Pallas, in her shade 10
Reared, that I first might pay the nursing debt,
Hallowing her fame with flower of third-year feasts,
And first bow down the bridled strength of steeds
To lose the wild wont of their birth, and bear
Clasp of man's knees and steerage of his hand, 15
Or fourfold service of his fire-swift wheels
That whirl the four-yoked chariot; me the king
Who stand before thee naked now, and cry,
O holy and general mother of all men born,
But mother most and motherliest of mine, 20
Earth, for I ask thee rather of all the Gods,
What have we done? what word mistimed or work
Hath winged the wild feet of this timeless curse
To fall as fire upon us? Lo, I stand
Here on this brow's crown of the city's head 25

That crowns its lovely body, till death's hour
 Waste it; but now the dew of dawn and birth
 Is fresh upon it from thy womb, and we
 Behold it born how beauteous; one day more
 I see the world's wheel of the circling sun 30
 Roll up rejoicing to regard on earth
 This one thing goodliest, fair as heaven or he,
 Worth a God's gaze or strife of Gods; but now
 Would this day's ebb of their spent wave of strife
 Sweep it to sea, wash it on wreck, and leave 35
 A costless thing contemned; and in our stead,
 Where these walls were and sounding streets of men,
 Make wide a waste for tongueless water-herds
 And spoil of ravening fishes; that no more
 Should men say, Here was Athens. This shalt thou 40
 Sustain not, nor thy son endure to see,
 Nor thou to live and look on; for the womb
 Bare me not base that bare me miserable,
 To hear this loud brood of the Thracian foam
 Break its broad strength of billowy-beating war 45
 Here, and upon it as a blast of death
 Blowing, the keen wrath of a fire-souled king,
 A strange growth grafted on our natural soil,
 A root of Thrace in Eleusinian earth
 Set for no comfort to the kindly land, 50
 Son of the sea's lord and our first-born foe,
 Eumolpus; nothing sweet in ears of thine
 The music of his making, nor a song
 Toward hopes of our auspicious; for the note
 Rings as for death oracular to thy sons 55
 That goes before him on the sea-wind blown
 Full of this charge laid on me, to put out

The brief light kindled of mine own child's life,
Or with this helmsman hand that steers the state
Run right on the under shoal and ridge of death 60
The populous ship with all its fraughtage gone
And sails that were to take the wind of time
Rent, and the tackling that should hold out fast
In confluent surge of loud calamities
Broken, with spars of rudders and lost oars 65
That were to row toward harbour and find rest
In some most glorious haven of all the world
And else may never near it: such a song
The Gods have set his lips on fire withal
Who threatens now in all their names to bring 70
Ruin; but none of these, thou knowest, have I
Chid with my tongue or cursed at heart for grief,
Knowing how the soul runs reinless on sheer death,
Whose grief or joy takes part against the Gods.
And what they will is more than our desire, 75
And their desire is more than what we will.
For no man's will and no desire of man's
Shall stand as doth a God's will. Yet, O fair
Mother, that seest me how I cast no word
Against them, plead no reason, crave no cause, 80
Boast me not blameless, nor bewEEP me wronged,
By this fair wreath of towers we have decked thee with,
This chaplet that we give thee woven of walls,
This girdle of gate and temple and citadel
Drawn round beneath thy bosom, and fast linked 85
As to thine heart's root—this dear crown of thine,
This present light, this city—be not thou
Slow to take heed nor slack to strengthen her,
Fare we so short-lived howsoe'er, and pay

What price we may to ransom thee thy town,
 Not me my life; but thou that diest not, thou, 90
 Though all our house die for this people's sake,
 Keep thou for ours thy crown our city, guard
 And give it life the lovelier that we died.

CHORUS

Sun, that hast lightened and loosed by thy might ~ 95
 Ocean and Earth from the lordships of night, ~
 Quickening with vision his eye that was veiled, ~
 Freshening the force in her heart that had failed, ~
 That sister fettered and blinded brother ~
 Should have sight by thy grace and delight of each
 other, ~ 100

Behold now and see ~
 What profit is given them of thee; ~
 What wrath has enkindled with madness of mind ~
 Her limbs that were bounden, his face that was blind, ~
 To be locked as in wrestle together, and lighten ~ 105
 With fire that shall darken thy fire in the sky, ~
 Body to body and eye against eye ~

In a war against kind, ~
 Till the bloom of her fields and her high hills whiten ~
 With the foam of his waves more high. ~ 110
 For the sea-marks set to divide of old ~
 The kingdoms to Ocean and Earth assigned, ~
 The hoar sea-fields from the cornfield's gold, ~
 His wine-bright waves from her vineyards' fold, ~

Frail forces we find 115
 To bridle the spirit of Gods or bind
 Till the heat of their hearts wax cold.
 But the peace that was stablished between them to stand

Is rent now in twain by the strength of his hand
Who stirs up the storm of his sons overbold 120
To pluck from fight what he lost of right,
By council and judgment of Gods that spake
And gave great Pallas the strife's fair stake,
The lordship and love of the lovely land,
The grace of the town that hath on it for crown 125
But a headband to wear
Of violets one-hued with her hair:
For the vales and the green high places of earth
Hold nothing so fair,
And the depths of the sea bear no such birth 130
Of the manifold births they bear.
Too well, too well was the great stake worth
A strife divine for the Gods to judge,
A crowned God's triumph, a foiled God's grudge,
Though the loser be strong and the victress wise 135
Who played long since for so large a prize,
The fruitful immortal anointed adored
Dear city of men without master or lord,
Fair fortress and fostress of sons born free,
Who stand in her sight and in thine, O sun, 140
Slaves of no man, subjects of none;
A wonder enthroned on the hills and sea,
A maiden crowned with a fourfold glory
That none from the pride of her head may rend,
Violet and olive-leaf purple and hoary, 145
Song-wreath and story the fairest of fame,
Flowers that the winter can blast not or bend;
A light upon earth as the sun's own flame
A name as his name,
Athens, a praise without end. 150

A noise is arisen against us of waters, [Str. 1.
 A sound as of battle come up from the sea.
 Strange hunters are hard on us, hearts without pity;
 They have staked their nets round the fair young city,
 That the sons of her strength and her virgin daughters 155

Should find not whither alive to flee.
 And we know not yet of the word unwritten, [Ant. 1.
 The doom of the Pythian we have not heard;
 From the navel of earth and the veiled mid altar
 We wait for a token with hopes that falter, 160
 With fears that hang on our hearts thought-smitten
 Lest her tongue be kindled with no good word.

O thou not born of the womb, nor bred [Str. 2.
 In the bride-night's warmth of a changed God's bed,
 But thy life as a lightning was flashed from the light of thy
 father's head. 165

O chief God's child by a motherless birth,
 If aught in thy sight we indeed be worth,
 Keep death from us thou, that art none of the Gods of the
 dead under earth.

Thou that hast power on us, save, if thou wilt; [Ant. 2.
 Let the blind wave breach not thy wall scarce built; 170
 But bless us not so as by bloodshed, impute not for grace
 to us guilt,

Nor by price of pollution of blood set us free;
 Let the hands be taintless that clasp thy knee,
 Nor a maiden be slain to redeem for a maiden her shrine
 from the sea.

O earth, O sun, turn back [Str. 3.
 Full on his deadly track 176
 Death, that would smite you black and mar your creatures,

And with one hand disroot
All tender flower and fruit,
With one strike blind and mute the heaven's fair features, 180
Pluck out the eyes of morn, and make
Silence in the east and blackness whence the bright songs
break
Help, earth, help, heaven, that hear [Ant. 3.
The song-notes of our fear,
Shrewd notes and shrill, not clear or joyful-sounding; 185
Hear, highest of Gods, and stay
Death on his hunter's way,
Full on his forceless prey his beagles hounding;
Break thou his bow, make short his hand,
Maim his fleet foot whose passage kills the living land. 190
Let a third wave smite not us, father, [Str. 4.
Long since sore smitten of twain,
Lest the house of thy son's son perish
And his name be barren on earth.
Whose race wilt thou comfort rather 195
If none to thy son remain?
Whose seed wilt thou choose to cherish
If his be cut off in the birth?
For the first fair graft of his grafting [Ant. 4.
Was rent from its maiden root 200
By the strong swift hand of a lover
Who fills the night with his breath;
On the lip of the stream low-laughing
Her green soft virginal shoot
Was plucked from the stream-side cover 205
By the grasp of a love like death.
For a God's was the mouth that kissed her [Str. 5.
Who speaks, and the leaves lie dead,

When winter awakes as at warning
 To the sound of his foot from Thrace. 210
 Nor happier the bed of her sister
 Though Love's self laid her abed
 By a bridegroom beloved of the morning
 And fair as the dawn's own face.
 For Procris, ensnared and ensnaring [Ant. 5.
 By the fraud of a twofold wile, 216
 With the point of her own spear stricken
 By the gift of her own hand fell.
 Oversubtle in doubts, overdaring
 In deeds and devices of guile, 220
 And strong to quench as to quicken,
 Blind, Love, they have named thee well.
 By thee was the spear's edge whetted [Str. 6.
 That laid her dead in the dew,
 In the moist green glens of the midland 225
 By her dear lord slain and thee.
 And him at the cliff's end fretted
 By the grey keen waves, him too,
 Thine hand from the white-browed headland
 Flung down for a spoil to the sea. 230
 But enough now of griefs grey-growing [Ant. 6.
 Have darkened the house divine,
 Have flowered on its boughs and faded,
 And green is the brave stock yet.
 O father all seeing and all knowing, 235
 Let the last fruit fall not of thine
 From the tree with whose boughs we are shaded,
 From the stock that thy son's hand set.

ERECOTHEUS

O daughter of Cephissus, from all time
Wise have I found thee, wife and queen, of heart 240
Perfect; nor in the days that knew not wind
Nor days when storm blew death upon our peace
Was thine heart swoln with seed of pride, or bowed
With blasts of bitter fear that break men's souls
Who lift too high their minds toward heaven, in thought
245

Too godlike grown for worship; but of mood
Equal, in good time reverent of time bad,
And glad in ill days of the good that were.
Nor now too would I fear thee, now misdoubt
Lest fate should find thee lesser than thy doom, 250
Chosen if thou be to bear and to be great
Haply beyond all women; and the word
Speaks thee divine, dear queen, that speaks thee dead,
Dead being alive, or quick and dead in one
Shall not men call thee living? yet I fear 255
To slay thee timeless with my proper tongue,
With lips, thou knowest, that love thee; and such work
Was never laid of Gods on men, such word
No mouth of man learnt ever, as from mine
Most loth to speak thine ear most loth shall take 260
And hold it hateful as the grave to hear.

PRAXITHEA

That word there is not in all speech of man,
King, that being spoken of the Gods and thee
I have not heart to honour, or dare hold
More than I hold thee or the Gods in hate 265
Hearing; but if my heart abhor it heard

Being insubmissive, hold me not thy wife
 But use me, like a stranger, whom thine hand
 Hath fed by chance and finding thence no thanks
 Flung off for shame's sake to forgetfulness. 270

ERECHTHEUS

O, of what breath shall such a word be made,
 Or from what heart find utterance? Would my tongue
 Were rent forth rather from the quivering root
 Than made as fire or poison thus for thee.

PRAXITHEA

But if thou speak of blood, and I that hear 275
 Be chosen of all for this land's love to die
 And save to thee thy city, know this well,
 Happiest I hold me of her seed alive.

ERECHTHEUS

O sun that seest, what saying was this of thine,
 God, that thy power has breathed into my lips? 280
 For from no sunlit shrine darkling it came.

PRAXITHEA

What portent from the mid oracular place
 Hath smitten thee so like a curse that flies
 Wingless, to waste men with its plagues? yet speak.

ERECHTHEUS

Thy blood the Gods require not; take this first. 285

PRAXITHEA

To me than thee more grievous this should sound.

ERECITHEUS

That word rang truer and bitterer than it knew.

PRAXITHEA

This is not then thy grief, to see me die?

ERECITHEUS

Die shalt thou not, yet give thy blood to death.

PRAXITHEA

If this ring worse I know not; strange it rang. 290

ERECITHEUS

Alas, thou knowest not; woe is me that know.

PRAXITHEA

And woe shall mine be, knowing; yet halt not here.

ERECITHEUS

Guiltless of blood this state may stand no more.

PRAXITHEA

Firm let it stand whatever bleed or fall.

ERECHTHEUS

O Gods, that I should say it shall and weep. 295

PRAXITHEA

Weep, and say this? no tears should bathe such words.

ERECHTHEUS

Woe's me that I must weep upon them, woe.

PRAXITHEA

What stain is on them for thy tears to cleanse?

ERECHTHEUS

A stain of blood unpurgeable with tears.

PRAXITHEA

Whence? for thou sayest it is and is not mine. 300

ERECHTHEUS

Hear then and know why only of all men I
 That bring such news as mine is, I alone
 Must wash good words with weeping; I and thou,
 Woman, must wail to hear men sing, must groan
 To see their joy who love us; all our friends 305
 Save only we, and all save we that love
 This holiness of Athens, in our sight
 Shall lift their hearts up, in our hearing praise
 Gods whom we may not; for to these they give
 Life of their children, flower of all their seed, 310
 For all their travail fruit, for all their hopes

Harvest; but we for all our good things, we
Have at their hands which fill all these folk full
Death, barrenness, child-slaughter, curses, cares,
Sea-leaguer and land-shipwreck; which of these, 315
Which wilt thou first give thanks for? all are thine.

PRAXITHEA

What first they give who give this city good,
For that first given to save it I give thanks
First, and thanks heartier from a happier tongue,
More than for any my peculiar grace 320
Shown me and not my country; next for this,
That none of all these but for all these I
Must bear my burden, and no eye but mine
Weep of all women's in this broad land born
Who see their land's deliverance; but much more, 325
But most for this I thank them most of all,
That this their edge of doom is chosen to pierce
My heart and not my country's; for the sword
Drawn to smite there and sharpened for such stroke
Should wound more deep than any turned on me. 330

CHORUS

Well fares the land that bears such fruit, and well
The spirit that breeds such thought and speech in man.

ERECOTHEUS

O woman, thou hast shamed my heart with thine,
To show so strong a patience; take then all;
For all shall break not nor bring down thy soul. 335
The word that journeying to the bright God's shrine

Who speaks askance and darkling, but his name
 Hath in it slaying and ruin broad writ out,
 I heard, hear thou: thus saith he; There shall die
 One soul for all this people; from thy womb 340
 Came forth the seed that here on dry bare ground
 Death's hand must sow untimely, to bring forth
 Nor blade nor shoot in season, being by name
 To the under Gods made holy, who require
 For this land's life her death and maiden blood 345
 To save a maiden city. Thus I heard,
 And thus with all said leave thee; for save this
 No word is left us, and no hope alive.

CHORUS

He hath uttered too surely his wrath not obscurely, nor
 wrapt as in mists of his breath, [Str.
 The master that lightens not hearts he enlightens, but
 gives them foreknowledge of death. 350
 As a bolt from the cloud hath he sent it aloud and pro-
 claimed it afar,
 From the darkness and height of the horror of night hath
 he shown us a star.
 Star may I name it and err not, or flame shall I say,
 Born of the womb that was born for the tomb of the
 day?
 O Night, whom other but thee for mother, and Death for
 the father, Night, [Ant.
 Shall we dream to discover, save thee and thy lover, to
 bring such a sorrow to sight? 356
 From the slumberless bed for thy bed-fellow spread and
 his bride under earth
 Hast thou brought forth a wild and insatiable child, an
 unbearable birth.

Fierce are the fangs of his wrath, and the pangs that
they give;
None is there, none that may bear them, not one that
would live. 360

CHTHONIA

Forth of the fine-spun folds of veils that hide
My virgin chamber toward the full-faced sun
I set my foot not moved of mine own will,
Unmaidenlike, nor with unprompted speed
Turn eyes too broad or doglike unabashed 365
On reverend heads of men and thence on thine,
Mother, now covered from the light and bowed
As hers who mourns her brethern; but what grief
Bends thy blind head thus earthward, holds thus mute,
I know not till thy will be to lift up 370
Toward mine thy sorrow-muffled eyes and speak;
And till thy will be would I know this not.

PRAXITHEA

Old men and childless, or if sons ye have seen
And daughters, elder-born were these than mine,
Look on this child, how young of years, how sweet, 375
How scant of time and green of age her life
Puts forth its flower of girlhood; and her gait
How virginal, how soft her speech, her eyes
How seemly smiling; wise should all ye be,
All honourable and kindly men of age; 380
Now give me counsel and one word to say
That I may bear to speak, and hold my peace
Henceforth for all time even as all ye now.
Dumb are ye all, bowed eyes and tongueless mouths,

Unprofitable; if this were wind that speaks, 385
 As much its breath might move you. Thou then, child,
 Set thy sweet eyes on mine; look through them well;
 Take note of all the writing of my face
 As of a tablet or a tomb inscribed
 That bears me record; lifeless now, my life 390
 Thereon that was think written; brief to read,
 Yet shall the scripture sear thine eyes as fire
 And leave them dark as dead men's. Nay, dear child,
 Thou hast no skill, my maiden, and no sense
 To take such knowledge; sweet is all thy lore, 395
 And all this bitter; yet I charge thee learn
 And love and lay this up within thine heart,
 Even this my word; less ill it were to die
 Than live and look upon thy mother dead,
 Thy mother-land that bare thee; no man slain 400
 But him who hath seen it shall men count unblest,
 None blest as him who hath died and seen it not.

CHTHONIA

That sight some God keep from me though I die.

PRAXITHEA

A God from thee shall keep it; fear not this.

CHTHONIA

Thanks all my life long shall he gain of mine. 405

PRAXITHEA

Short gain of all yet shall he get of thee.

CHTHONIA

Brief be my life, yet so long live my thanks.

PRAXITHEA

So long? so little; how long shall they live?

CHTHONIA

Even while I see the sunlight and thine eyes.

PRAXITHEA

Would mine might shut ere thine upon the sun. 410

CHTHONIA

For me thou prayest unkindly; change that prayer.

PRAXITHEA

Not well for me thou sayest, and ill for thee.

CHTHONIA

Nay, for me well, if thou shalt live, not I.

PRAXITHEA

How live, and lose these loving looks of thine?

CHTHONIA

It seems I too, thus praying, then, love thee not. 415

PRAXITHEA

Lov'st thou not life? what wouldst thou do to die?

CHTHONIA

Well, but not more than all things, love I life.

PRAXITHEA

And fain wouldst keep it as thine age allows?

CHTHONIA

Fain would I live, and fain not fear to die.

PRAXITHEA

That I might bid thee die not! Peace; no more. 420

CHORUS

A godlike race of grief the Gods have set
For these to run matched equal, heart with heart.

PRAXITHEA

Child of the chief of Gods, and maiden crowned,
Queen of these towers and fostress of their king, -
Pallas, and thou my father's holiest head, 425
A living well of life nor stanch'd nor stained,
O God Cephissus, thee too charge I next,
Be to me judge and witness; nor thine ear
Shall now my tongue invoke not, thou to me
Most hateful of things holy, mournfullest 430
Of all old sacred streams that wash the world,
Ilissus, on whose marge at flowery play
A whirlwind-footed bridegroom found my child
And rapt her northward where mine elder-born
Keeps now the Thracian bride-bed of a God 435

Intolerable to seamen, but this land
Finds him in hope for her sake favourable,
A gracious son by wedlock; hear me then
Thou likewise, if with no faint heart or false
The word I say be said, the gift be given, 440
Which might I choose I had rather die than give
Or speak and die not. Ere thy limbs were made
Or thine eyes lightened, strife, thou knowest, my child,
'Twixt God and God had risen, which heavenlier name
Should here stand hallowed, whose more liberal grace 445
Should win this city's worship, and our land
To which of these do reverence; first the lord
Whose wheels make lightnings of the foam-flowered sea
Here on this rock, whose height brow-bound with dawn
Is head and heart of Athens, one sheer blow 450
Struck, and beneath the triple wound that shook
The stony sinews and stark roots of the earth
Sprang toward the sun a sharp salt fount, and sank
Where lying it lights the heart up of the hill,
A well of bright strange brine; but she that reared 455
Thy father with her same chaste fostering hand
Set for a sign against it in our guard
The holy bloom of the olive, whose hoar leaf
High in the shadowy shrine of Pandrosus
Hath honour of us all; and of this strife 460
The twelve most high Gods judging with one mouth
Acclaimed her victress; wroth whereat, as wronged
That she should hold from him such prize and place,
The strong king of the tempest-rifted sea
Loosed reinless on the low Thriasian plain 465
The thunders of his chariots, swallowing stunned
Earth, beasts, and men, the whole blind foundering world

That was the sun's at morning, and ere noon
 Death's; nor this only prey fulfilled his mind;
 For with strange crook-toothed prows of Carian folk 470
 Who snatch a sanguine life out of the sea,
 Thieves keen to pluck their bloody fruit of spoil
 From the grey fruitless waters, has their God
 Furrowed our shores to waste them, as the fields
 Were landward harried from the north with swords 475
 Aonian, sickles of man-slaughtering edge
 Ground for no hopeful harvest of live grain
 Against us in Bœotia; these being spent,
 Now this third time his wind of wrath has blown
 Right on this people a mightier wave of war, 480
 Three times more huge a ruin; such its ridge
 Foam-rimmed and hollow like the womb of heaven,
 But black for shining, and with death for life
 Big now to birth and ripe with child, full-blown
 With fear and fruit of havoc, takes the sun 485
 Out of our eyes, darkening the day, and blinds
 The fair sky's face unseasonably with change,
 A cloud in one and billow of battle, a surge
 High reared as heaven with monstrous surf of spears
 That shake on us their shadow, till men's heads 490
 Bend, and their hearts even with its forward wind
 Wither, so blasts all seed in them of hope
 Its breath and blight of presage; yea, even now
 The winter of this wind out of the deeps
 Makes cold our trust in comfort of the Gods 495
 And blinds our eye toward outlook; yet not here,
 Here never shall the Thracian plant on high
 For ours his father's symbol, nor with wreaths
 A strange folk wreathe it upright set and crowned

Here where our natural people born behold 500
The golden Gorgon of the shield's defence
That screens their flowering olive, nor strange Gods
Be graced, and Pallas here have praise no more.
And if this be not I must give my child,
Thee, mine own very blood and spirit of mine, 505
Thee to be slain. Turn from me, turn thine eyes
A little from me; I can bear not yet
To see if still they smile on mine or no,
If fear make faint the light in them, or faith
Fix them as stars of safety. Need have we, 510
Sore need of stars that set not in mid storm,
Lights that outlast the lightnings; yet my heart
Endures not to make proof of thine or these,
Not yet to know thee whom I made, and bare
What manner of woman; had I borne thee man, 515
I had made no question of thine eyes or heart,
Nor spared to read the scriptures in them writ,
Wert thou my son; yet couldst thou then but die
Fallen in sheer fight by chance and charge of spears
And have no more of memory, fill no tomb 520
More famous than thy fellows in fair field,
Where many share the grave, many the praise;
But one crown shall one only girl my child
Wear, dead for this dear city, and give back life
To him that gave her and to me that bare, 525
And save two sisters living; and all this,
Is this not all good? I shall give thee, child,
Thee but by fleshly nature mine, to bleed
For dear land's love; but if the city fall
What part is left me in my children then? 530
But if it stand and thou for it lie dead,

Then hast thou in it a better part than we,
 A holier portion than we all; for each
 Hath but the length of his own life to live,
 And this most glorious mother-land on earth 535
 To worship till that life have end; but thine
 Hath end no more than hers; thou, dead, shalt live
 Till Athens live not; for the days and nights
 Given of thy bare brief dark dividual life,
 Shall she give thee half all her agelong own 540
 And all its glory; for thou givest her these;
 But with one hand she takes and gives again
 More than I gave or she requires of thee.
 Come therefore, I will make thee fit for death,
 I that could give thee, dear, no gift at birth 545
 Save of light life that breathes and bleeds, even I
 Will help thee to this better gift than mine
 And lead thee by this little living hand
 That death shall make so strong, to that great end
 Whence it shall lighten like a God's, and strike 550
 Dead the strong heart of battle that would break
 Athens; but ye, pray for this land, old men,
 That it may bring forth never child on earth
 To love it less, for none may more, than we.

CHORUS

Out of the north wind grief came forth, [Str. 1.
 And the shining of a sword out of the sea. 556
 Yea, of old the first-blown blast blew the prelude of this
 last,
 The blast of his trumpet upon Rhodope.
 Out of the north skies full of his cloud,
 With the clamour of his storms as of a crowd 560

At the wheels of a great king crying aloud,
At the axle of a strong king's car
That has girded on the girdle of war—
With hands that lightened the skies in sunder
And feet whose fall was followed of thunder, 565
 A God, a great God strange of name,
 With horse-yoke fleeter-hoofed than flame,
To the mountain bed of a maiden came,
Oreithyia, the bride mismated,
Wofully wed in a snow-strewn bed 570
With a bridegroom that kisses the bride's mouth dead;
Without garland, without glory, without song,
As a fawn by night on the hills belated,
Given over for a spoil unto the strong.
From lips how pale so keen a wail [*Ant.* 1.
 At the grasp of a God's hand on her she gave, 576
When his breath that darkens air made a havoc of her
 hair,
 It rang from the mountain even to the wave;
Rang with a cry, *Woe's me, woe is me!*
From the darkness upon Hæmus to the sea: 580
And with hands that clung to her new lord's knee;
As a virgin overborne with shame,
She besought him by her spouseless fame,
By the blameless breasts of a maid unmarried
And locks unmaidenly rent and harried, 585
 And all her flower of body, born
 To match the maidenhood of morn,
With the might of the wind's wrath wrenched and torn.
Vain, all vain as a dead man's vision
Falling by night in his old friend's sight, 590
To be scattered with slumber and slain ere light;
Such a breath of such a bridegroom in that hour

Of her prayers made mock, of her fears derision,
And a ravage of her youth as of a flower.

With a leap of his limbs as a lion's, a cry from his lips as of
thunder, [Str. 2.

In a storm of amorous godhead filled with fire, 596
From the height of the heaven that was rent with the roar
of his coming in sunder,

Sprang the strong God on the spoil of his desire.
And the pines of the hills were as green reeds shattered,
And their branches as buds of the soft spring scattered,
600

And the west wind and east, and the sound of the south,
Fell dumb at the blast of the north wind's mouth,
At the cry of his coming out of heaven.

And the wild beasts quailed in the rifts and hollows
Where hound nor clarion of huntsman follows, 605
And the depths of the sea were aghast, and whitened,
And the crowns of their waves were as flame that
lightened,

And the heart of the floods thereof was riven.

But she knew not him coming for terror, she felt not her
wrong that he wrought her, [Ant. 2.

When her locks as leaves were shed before his breath, 610
And she heard not for terror his prayer, though the cry was
a God's that besought her,

Blown from lips that strew the world-wide seas with
death.

For the heart was molten within her to hear,
And her knees beneath her were loosened for fear,
And her blood fast bound as a frost-bound water, 615
And the soft new bloom of the green earth's daughter

Wind-wasted as blossom of a tree;
As the wild God rapt her from earth's breast lifted,
On the strength of the stream of his dark breath drifted,
From the bosom of earth as a bride from the mother, 620

With storm for bridesman and wreck for brother,
As a cloud that he sheds upon the sea.

Of this hoary-headed woe [*Epode.*]
Song made memory long ago;
Now a younger grief to mourn 625
Needs a new song younger born.
Who shall teach our tongues to reach
What strange height of saddest speech,
For the new bride's sake that is given to be
A stay to fetter the foot of the sea, 630
Lest it quite spurn down and trample the town,
Ere the violets be dead that were plucked for its crown,
Or its olive-leaf whiten and wither?
Who shall say of the wind's way
That he journeyed yesterday, 635
Or the track of the storm that shall sound to-morrow,
If the new be more than the grey-grown sorrow?
For the wind of the green first season was keen,
And the blast shall be sharper than blew between
That the breath of the sea blows hither. 640

HERALD OF EUMOLPUS

Old men, grey borderers on the march of death,
Tongue-fighters, tough of talk and sinewy speech,
Else nerveless, from no crew of such faint folk
Whose tongues are stouter than their hands come I
To bid not you to battle; let them strike 645
Whose swords are sharper than your keen-tongued wail,
And ye, sit fast and sorrow; but what man
Of all this land-folk and earth-labouring herd
For heart or hand seems foremost, him I call

If heart be his to hearken, him bid forth 650
 To try if one be in the sun's sight born
 Of all that grope and grovel on dry ground
 That may join hands in battle-grip for death
 With them whose seed and strength is of the sea.

CHORUS

Know thou this much for all thy loud blast blown, 655
 We lack not hands to speak with, swords to plead,
 For proof of peril, not of boisterous breath,
 Sea-wind and storm of barren mouths that foam
 And rough rock's edge of menace; and short space
 May lesson thy large ignorance and inform 660
 This insolence with knowledge if there live
 Men earth-begotten of no tenderer thews
 Than knit the great joints of the grim sea's brood
 With hasps of steel together; heaven to help,
 One man shall break, even on their own flood's verge, 665
 That iron bulk of battle; but thine eye
 That sees it now swell higher than sand or shore
 Haply shall see not when thine host shall shrink.

HERALD OF EUMOLPUS

Not haply, nay, but surely, shall not thine.

CHORUS

That lot shall no God give who fights for thee. 670

HERALD OF EUMOLPUS

Shall Gods bear bit and bridle, fool, of men?

CHORUS

Nor them forbid we nor shalt thou constrain.

HERALD OF EUMOLPUS

Yet say'st thou none shall make the good lot mine?

CHORUS

Of thy side none, nor moved for fear of thee.

HERALD OF EUMOLPUS

Gods hast thou then to baffle Gods of ours? 675

CHORUS

Nor thine nor mine, but equal-souled are they.

HERALD OF EUMOLPUS

Toward good and ill, then, equal-eyed of soul?

CHORUS

Nay, but swift-eyed to note where ill thoughts breed.

HERALD OF EUMOLPUS

Thy shaft word-feathered flies yet far of me.

CHORUS

Pride knows not, wounded, till the heart be cleft. 680

HERALD OF EUMOLPUS

No shaft wounds deep whose wing is plumed with words.

CHORUS

Lay that to heart, and bid thy tongue learn grace.

HERALD OF EUMOLPUS

Grace shall thine own crave soon too late of mine.

CHORUS

Boast thou till then, but I wage words no more.

ERECOTHEUS

Man, what shrill wind of speech and wrangling air 685
 Blows in our ears a summons from thy lips
 Winged with what message, or what gift or grace
 Requiring? none but what his hand may take
 Here may the foe think hence to reap, nor this
 Except some doom from Godward yield it him. 690

HERALD OF EUMOLPUS

King of this land-folk, by my mouth to thee
 Thus saith the son of him that shakes thine earth,
 Eumolpus; now the stakes of war are set,
 For land or sea to win by throw and wear;
 Choose therefore or to quit thy side and give 695
 The palm unfought for to his bloodless hand,
 Or by that father's sceptre, and the foot
 Whose tramp far off makes tremble for pure fear
 Thy soul-struck mother, piercing like a sword
 The immortal womb that bare thee; by the waves 700
 That no man bridles and that bound thy world,
 And by the winds and storms of all the sea,
 He swears to raze from eyeshot of the sun

This city named not of his father's name,
And wash to deathward down one flood of doom 705
This whole fresh brood of earth yeaned naturally,
Green yet and faint in its first blade, unblown
With yellow hope of harvest; so do thou,
Seeing whom thy time is come to meet, for fear
Yield, or gird up thy force to fight and die. 710

ERECHTHEUS

To fight then be it; for if to die or live,
No man but only a God knows this much yet
Seeing us fare forth, who bear but in our hands
The weapons not the fortunes of our fight;
For these now rest as lots that yet undrawn 715
Lie in the lap of the unknown hour; but this
I know, not thou, whose hollow mouth of storm
Is but a warlike wind, a sharp salt breath
That bites and wounds not; death nor life of mine
Shall give to death or lordship of strange kings 720
The soul of this live city, nor their heel
Bruise her dear brow discrowned, nor snaffle or goad
Wound her free mouth or stain her sanguine side
Yet masterless of man; so bid thy lord
Learn ere he weep to learn it, and too late 725
Gnash teeth that could not fasten on her flesh,
And foam his life out in dark froth of blood
Vain as a wind's waif of the loud-mouthed sea
Torn from the wave's edge whitening. Tell him this;
Though thrice his might were mustered for our scathe 730
And thicker set with fence of thorn-edged spears
Than sands are whirled about the wintering beach
When storms have swoln the rivers, and their blasts

Have breached the broad sea-banks with stress of sea,
 That waves of inland and the main make war 735
 As men that mix and grapple; though his ranks
 Were more to number than all wildwood leaves
 The wind waves on the hills of all the world,
 Yet should the heart not faint, the head not fall,
 The breath not fail of Athens. Say, the Gods 740
 From lips that have no more on earth to say
 Have told thee this the last good news or ill
 That I shall speak in sight of earth and sun
 Or he shall hear and see them: for the next
 That ear of his from tongue of mine may take 745
 Must be the first word spoken underground
 From dead to dead in darkness. Hence; make haste,
 Lest war's fleet foot be swifter than thy tongue
 And I that part not to return again
 On him that comes not to depart away 750
 Be fallen before thee; for the time is full,
 And with such mortal hope as knows not fear
 I go this high last way to the end of all.

CHORUS

Who shall put a bridle in the mourner's lips to chasten
 them, [Str. 1.
 Or seal up the fountains of his tears for shame? 755
 Song nor prayer nor prophecy shall slacken tears nor
 hasten them,
 Till grief be within him as a burnt-out flame;
 Till the passion be broken in his breast
 And the might thereof molten into rest,
 And the rain of eyes that weep be dry, 760
 And the breath be stilled of lips that sigh.

Death at last for all men is a harbour; yet they flee from it,
[*Ant.* 1.

Set sails to the storm-wind and again to sea;
Yet for all their labour no whit further shall they be from it,
Nor longer but wearier shall their life's work be. 765

And with anguish of travail until night

Shall they steer into shipwreck out of sight,

And with oars that break and shrouds that strain

Shall they drive whence no ship steers again.

Bitter and strange is the word of the God most high, [*Str.* 2.

And steep the strait of his way, 771

Through a pass rock-rimmed and narrow the light that
gleams

On the faces of men falls faint as the dawn of dreams,

The dayspring of death as a star in an under sky

Where night is the dead men's day. 775

As darkness and storm is his will that on earth is done,
[*Ant.* 2.

As a cloud is the face of his strength.

King of kings, holiest of holies, and mightiest of might,

Lord of the lords of thine heaven that are humble in thy
sight,

Hast thou set not an end for the path of the fires of the sun,
780

To appoint him a rest at length?

Hast thou told not by measure the waves of the waste wide
sea, [*Str.* 2.

And the ways of the wind their master and thrall to thee?

Hast thou filled not the furrows with fruit for the
world's increase?

Has thine ear not heard from of old or thine eye not read
785

The thought and the deed of us living, the doom of us dead?

Hast thou made not war upon earth, and again
made peace?

Therefore. O father, that seest us whose lives are a breath,
[*Ant.* 3.

Take off us thy burden, and give us not wholly to death.

For lovely is life, and the law wherein all things
live,

And gracious the season of each, and the hour of its kind,
791

And precious the seed of his life in a wise man's mind;

But all save life for his life will a base man give.
But a life that is given for the life of the whole live land,
[Str. 4.

From a heart unspotted a gift of a spotless hand, 795
Of pure will perfect and free, for the land's life's sake,
What man shall fear not to put forth his hand and take?
For the fruit of a sweet life plucked in its pure green prime
[Ant. 4.

On his hand who plucks is as blood, on his soul as crime.
With cursing ye buy not blessing, nor peace with strife, 800
And the hand is hateful that chaffers with death for life.

Hast thou heard, O my heart, and endurest [Str. 5.

The word that is said,

What a garland by sentence found surest

Is wrought for what head? 805

With what blossomless flowerage of sea-foam and blood-
coloured foliage inwound

It shall crown as a heifer's for slaughter the forehead for
marriage uncrowned?

How the veils and the wreaths that should cover
[Ant. 5.

The brows of the bride

Shall be shed by the breath of what lover 810

And scattered aside?

With a blast of the mouth of what bridegroom the crowns
shall be cast from her hair,

And her head by what altar made humble be left of them
naked and bare?

At a shrine unbeloved of a God un beholden a gift shall be
given for the land,

That its ramparts though shaken with clamour and horror
of manifold waters may stand: 815

That the crests of its citadels crowned and its turrets that
thrust up their heads to the sun

May behold him unblinded with darkness of waves over-
mastering their bulwarks begun.

As a bride shall they bring her, a prey for the bridegroom, a
flower for the couch of her lord; [Ant. 6.

They shall muffle her mouth that she cry not or curse them,
and cover her eyes from the sword.

They shall fasten her lips as with bit and with bridle, and
darken the light of her face, 820

That the soul of the slayer may not falter, his heart be not
molten, his hand give not grace.

If she weep then, yet may none that hear take pity;
[Str. 7.

If she cry not, none should hearken though she cried.
Shall a virgin shield thine head for love, O city,

With a virgin's blood anointed as for pride? 825
Yet we held thee dear and hallowed of her favour, [Ant. 7.

Dear of all men held thy people to her heart;
Nought she loves the breath of blood, the sanguine
savour,

Who hath built with us her throne and chosen her part,
Bloodless are her works, and sweet [Epode.

All the ways that feel her feet; 831
From the empire of her eyes

Light takes life and darkness flies;
From the harvest of her hands

Wealth strikes root in prosperous lands; 835
Wisdom of her word is made;

At her strength is strength afraid;
From the beam of her bright spear

War's fleet foot goes back for fear;

In her shrine she reared the birth 840
 Fire-begotten on live earth;
 Glory from her helm was shed
 On his olive-shadowed head;
 By no hand but his shall she
 Scourage the storms back of the sea, 845
 To no fame but his shall give
 Grace being dead with hers to live,
 And in double name divine
 Half the godhead of their shrine.

But now with what word, with what woe may we meet 850
 The timeless passage of piteous feet,
 Hither that bend to the last way's end
 They shall walk upon earth?

What song be rolled for a bride black-stoled
 And the mother whose hand of her hand hath hold? 855
 For anguish of heart is my soul's strength broken
 And the tongue sealed fast that would fain have spoken,
 To behold thee, O child of so bitter a birth

That we counted so sweet,
 What way thy steps to what bride-feast tend, 860
 What gift he must give that shall wed thee for token
 If the bridegroom be goodly to greet.

CHTHONIA

People, old men of my city, lordly wise and hoar of head,
 I a spouseless bride and crownless but with garlands of the
 dead
 From the fruitful light turn silent to my dark unchilded
 bed.

CHORUS

Wise of word was he too surely, but with deadlier wisdom
 wise, 866

First who gave thee name from under earth, no breath
from upper skies,
When, foredoomed to this day's darkness, their first day-
light filled thine eyes.

PRAXITHEA

Child, my child that wast and art but death's and now no
more of mine,
Half my heart is cloven with anguish by the sword made
sharp for thine, 870
Half exalts its wing for triumph, that I bare thee thus
divine.

CHTHONIA

Though for me the sword's edge thirst that sets no point
against thy breast,
Mother, O my mother, where I drank of life and fell on rest.
Thine, not mine, is all the grief that marks this hour
accurst and blest.

CHORUS

Sweet thy sleep and sweet the bosom was that gave thee
sleep and birth; 875
Harder now the breast, and girded with no marriage-band
for girth,
Where thine head shall sleep, the namechild of the lords of
under earth.

PRAXITHEA

Dark the name and dark the gifts they gave thee, child, in
childbirth were,
Sprung from him that rent the womb of earth, a bitter seed
to bear,
Born with groanings of the ground that gave him way
toward heaven's dear air. 880

CHTHONIA

Day to day makes answer, first to last, and life to death;
 but I,
 Born for death's sake, die for life's sake, if indeed this be to
 die,
 This my doom that seals me deathless till the springs of
 time run dry.

CHORUS

Children shalt thou bear to memory, that to man shalt
 bring forth none;
 Yea, the lordliest that lift eyes and hearts and songs to
 meet the sun, 885
 Names to fire men's ears like music till the round world's
 race be run.

PRAXITHEA

I thy mother, named of Gods that wreak revenge and
 brand with blame,
 Now for thy love shall be loved as thou, and famous with
 thy fame,
 While this city's name on earth shall be for earth her
 mightiest name.

CHTHONIA

That I may give this poor girl's blood of mine 890
 Scarce yet sun-warmed with summer, this thin life
 Still green with flowerless growth of seedling days,
 To build again my city; that no drop
 Fallen of these innocent veins on the cold ground
 But shall help knit the joints of her firm walls 895
 To knead the stones together, and make sure
 The band about her maiden girdlestead
 Once fastened, and of all men's violent hands
 Inviolable for ever; these to me

Were no such gifts as crave no thanksgiving, 900
If with one blow dividing the sheer life
I might make end, and one pang wind up all
And seal mine eyes from sorrow; for such end
The Gods give none they love not; but my heart,
That leaps up lightened of all sloth or fear 905
To take the sword's point, yet with one thought's load
Flags, and falls back, broken of wing, that halts
Maimed in mid flight for thy sake and borne down,
Mother, that in the places where I played
An arm's length from thy bosom and no more 910
Shalt find me never, nor thine eye wax glad
To mix with mine its eyesight and for love
Laugh without word, filled with sweet light, and speak
Divine dumb things of the inward spirit and heart,
Moved silently; nor hand or lip again 915
Touch hand or lip of either, but for mine
Shall thine meet only shadows of swift night,
Dreams and dead thoughts of dead things; and the bed
Thou strewedst, a sterile place for all time, strewn
For my sleep only, with its void sad sheets 920
Shall vex thee, and the unfruitful coverlid
For empty days reproach me dead, that leave
No profit of my body, but am gone
As one not worth being born to bear no seed,
A sapless stock and branchless; yet thy womb 925
Shall want not honour of me, that brought forth
For all this people freedom, and for earth
From the unborn city born out of my blood
To light the face of all men evermore
Glory; but lay thou this to thy great heart 930
Whereunder in the dark of birth conceived

Mine unlit life lay girdled with the zone
 That bound thy bridal bosom; set this thought
 Against all edge of evil as a sword
 To beat back sorrow, that for all the world 935
 Thou brought'st me forth a saviour, who shall save
 Athens; for none but I from none but thee
 Shall take this death for garland; and the men
 ✓ Mine unknown children of unsounded years,
 My sons unrisen shall rise up at thine hand, 940
 Sown of thy seed to bring forth seed to thee,
 And call thee most of all most fruitful found
 Blessed; but me too for my barren womb
 More than my sisters for their children born
 Shall these give honour, yea in scorn's own place 945
 Shall men set love and bring for mockery praise
 And thanks for curses; for the dry wild vine
 Scoffed at and cursed of all men that was I
 Shall shed them wine to make the world's heart warm,
 That all eyes seeing may lighten, and all ears 950
 Hear and be kindled; such a draught to drink
 Shall be the blood that bids this dust bring forth,
 The chaliced life here spilt on this mine earth,
 Mine, my great father's mother; whom I pray
 Take me now gently, tenderly take home, 955
 And softly lay in his my cold chaste hand
 Who is called of men by my name, being of Gods
 Charged only and chosen to bring men under earth,
 And now must lead and stay me with his staff
 ✓ A silent soul led of a silent God, 960
 Toward sightless things led sightless; and on earth
 I see now but the shadow of mine end,
 And this last night of all for me in heaven.

PRAXITHEA

Farewell I bid thee; so bid thou not me,
Lest the Gods hear and mock us; yet on these 965
I lay the weight not of this grief, nor cast
Ill words for ill deeds back; for if one say
They have done men wrong, what hurt have they to hear
Or he what help to have said it? surely, child,
If one among men born might say it and live 970
Blameless, none more than I may, who being vexed
Hold yet my peace; for now through tears enough
Mine eyes have seen the sun that from this day
Thine shall see never more; and in the night
Enough has blown of evil, and mine ears 975
With wail enough the winds have filled, and brought
Too much of cloud from over the sharp sea
To mar for me the morning; such a blast
Rent from these wide void arms and helpless breast
Long since one graft of me disbranched, and bore 980
Beyond the wild ways of the unwandered world
And loud wastes of the thunder-throated sea,
Springs of the night and openings of the heaven,
The old garden of the Sun; whence never more
From west or east shall winds bring back that blow 985
From folds of opening heaven or founts of night
The flower of mine once ravished, born my child
To bear strange children; nor on wings of theirs
Shall comfort come back to me, nor their sire
Breathe help upon my peril, nor his strength 990
Raise up my weakness; but of Gods and men
I drift unsteered on ruin, and the wave
Darkens my head with imminent height, and hangs

Dumb, filled too full with thunder that shall leave
 These ears death-deafened when the tide finds tongue 995
 And all its wrath bears on them; thee, O child,
 I help not, nor am holpen; fain, ah, fain,
 More than was ever mother born of man,
 Were I to help thee; fain beyond all prayer,
 Beyond all thought fain to redeem thee, torn 1000
 More timeless from me sorrowing than the dream
 That was thy sister; so shalt thou be too,
 Thou but a vision, shadow-shaped of sleep,
 By grief made out of nothing; now but once
 I touch, but once more hold thee, one more kiss 1005
 This last time and none other ever more
 Leave on thy lips and leave them. Go; thou wast
 My heart, my heart's blood, life-blood of my life,
 My child, my nursling: now this breast once thine
 Shall rear again no children; never now 1010
 Shall any mortal blossom born like thee
 Lie there, nor ever with small silent mouth
 Draw the sweet springs dry for an hour that feed
 The blind blithe life that knows not; never head
 Rest here to make these cold veins warm, nor eye 1015
 Laugh itself open with the lips that reach
 Lovingly toward a fount more loving; these
 Death makes as all good lesser things now dead,
 And all the latter hopes that flowered from these
 And fall as these fell fruitless; no joy more 1020
 Shall man take of thy maidenhood, no tongue
 Praise it; no good shall eyes get more of thee
 That lightened for thy love's sake. Now, take note,
 Give ear, O all ye people, that my word
 May pierce your hearts through, and the stroke that
 cleaves

Be fruitful to them; so shall all that hear 1026
Grow great at heart with child of thought most high
And bring forth seed in season; this my child,
This flower of this my body, this sweet life,
This fair live youth I give you, to be slain, 1030
Spent, shed, poured out, and perish; take my gift
And give it death and the under Gods who crave
So much for that they give; for this is more,
Much more is this than all we; for they give
Freedom, and for a blast, an air of breath, 1035
A little soul that is not, they give back
Light for all eyes, cheer for all hearts, and life
That fills the world's width full of fame and praise
And mightier love than children's. This they give,
The grace to make thy country great, and wrest 1040
From time and death power to take hold on her
And strength to scathe for ever; and this gift,
Is this no more than man's love is or mine,
Mine and all mothers'? nay, where that seems more,
Where one loves life of child, wife, father, friend, 1045
Son, husband, mother, more than this, even there
Are all these lives worth nothing, all loves else
With this love slain and buried, and their tomb
A thing for shame to spit on; for what love
Hath a slave left to love with? or the heart 1050
Base-born and bound in bondage fast to fear,
What should it do to love thee? what hath he,
The man that hath no country? Gods nor men
Have such to friend, yoked beast-like to base life,
Vile, fruitless, grovelling at the foot of death, 1055
Landless and kinless thralls of no man's blood,
Unchilded and unmothered, abject limbs

That breed things abject; but who loves on earth
 Not friend, wife, husband, father, mother, child,
 Nor loves his own life for his own land's sake, 1060
 But only this thing most, more this than all,
 He loves all well and well of all is loved,
 And this love lives for ever. See now, friends,
 My countrymen, my brothers, with what heart
 I give you this that of your hands again 1065
 The Gods require for Athens; as I give
 So give ye to them what their hearts would have
 Who shall give back things better; yea, and these
 I take for me to witness, all these Gods,
 Were their great will more grievous than it is,
 Not one but three, for this one thin-spun thread
 A threefold band of children would I give
 For this land's love's sake; for whose love to-day
 I bid thee, child, fare deathward and farewell.

CHORUS

O wofullest of women, yet of all 1075
 Happiest, thy word be hallowed; in all time
 Thy name shall blossom, and from strange new tongues
 High things be spoken of thee; for such grace
 The Gods have dealt to no man, that on none
 Have laid so heavy sorrow. From this day 1080
 Live thou assured of godhead in thy blood,
 And in thy fate no lowlier than a God
 In all good things and evil; such a name
 Shall be thy child this city's, and thine own
 Next hers that called it Athens. Go now forth 1085
 Blest, and grace with thee to the doors of death.

CHTHONIA

O city, O glory of Athens, O crown of my father's land,
farewell.

CHORUS

For welfare is given her of thee.

CHTHONIA

O Goddess, be good to thy people, that in them dominion
and freedom may dwell.

CHORUS

Turn from us the strengths of the sea. 1090

CHTHONIA

Let glory's and theirs be one name in the mouths of all
nations made glad with the sun.

CHORUS

For the cloud is blown back with my breath.

CHTHONIA

With the long last love of mine eyes I salute thee,
O land where my days now are done.

CHORUS

But her life shall be born of thy death. 1095

CHTHONIA

I put on me the darkness thy shadow, my mother, and
symbol,
O Earth, of my name.

CHORUS

For thine was her witness from birth.

CHTHONIA

In thy likeness I come to thee darkling, a daughter whose
dawn and her even are the same.

CHORUS

Be thine heart to her gracious, O Earth.

CHTHONIA

To thine own kind be kindly, for thy son's name's sake.
1100

CHORUS

That sons unborn may praise thee and thy first-born son.

CHTHONIA

Give me thy sleep, who give thee all my life awake.

CHORUS

Too swift a sleep, ere half the web of day be spun.

CHTHONIA

Death brings the shears or ever life wind up the weft.

CHORUS

Their edge is ground and sharpened; who shall stay his
hand? 1105

CHTHONIA

The woof is thin, a small short life, with no thread left.

CHORUS

Yet hath it strength, stretched out, to shelter all the land.

CHTHONIA

Too frail a tent for covering, and a screen too strait.

CHORUS

Yet broad enough for buckler shall thy sweet life be.

CHTHONIA

A little bolt to bar off battle from the gate. 1100

CHORUS

A wide sea-wall, that shatters the besieging sea.

CHTHONIA

I lift up mine eyes from the skirts of the shadow, [Str.
From the border of death to the limits of light;
O streams and rivers of mountain and meadow
That hallow the last of my sight, 1115
O father that wast of my mother
Cephisus, O thou too his brother
From the bloom of whose banks as a prey
Winds harried my sister away,
O crown on the world's head lying 1120
Too high for its waters to drown,
Take yet this one word of me dying,
O city, O crown.
Though land-wind and sea-wind with mouths that blow
slaughter [Ant.

Should gird them to battle against thee again, 1125
 New-born of the blood of a maiden thy daughter,
 The rage of their breath shall be vain.
 For their strength shall be quenched and made idle,
 And the foam of their mouths find a bridle,
 And the height of their heads bow down 1130
 At the foot of the towers of the town.
 Be blest and beloved as I love thee
 Of all that shall draw from thee breath;
 Be thy life as the sun's is above thee;
 I go to my death. 1135

CHORUS

Many loves of many a mood and many a kind [Str. 1.
 Fill the life of man, and mould the secret mind;
 Many days bring many dooms, to loose and bind;
 Sweet is each in season, good the gift it brings,
 Sweet as change of night and day with altering wings, 1140
 Night that lulls world-weary day, day that comforts night,
 Night that fills our eyes with sleep, day that fills with light.
 'None of all is lovelier, loftier love is none, [Ant. 1.
 Less is bride's for bridegroom, mother's less for son,
 Child, than this that crowns and binds up all in one; 1145
 Love of thy sweet light, thy fostering breast and hand,
 Mother Earth, and city chosen, and natural land;
 Hills that bring the strong streams forth, heights of
 heavenlier air,
 Fields aflower with winds and suns, woods with shadowing
 hair. 1149
 But none of the nations of men shall they liken to thee,
 [Str. 2.
 Whose children true-born and the fruit of thy body are we.

The rest are thy sons but in figure, in word are thy seed;
We only the flower of thy travail, thy children indeed.

Of thy soil hast thou fashioned our limbs, of thy waters
their blood,

And the life of thy springs everlasting is fount of our flood.
No wind oversea blew us hither adrift on thy shore, 1156
None sowed us by land in thy womb that conceived us and
bore.

But the stroke of the shaft of the sunlight that brought us
to birth

Pierced only and quickened thy furrows to bear us, O
Earth.

With the beams of his love wast thou cloven as with iron or
fire, 1160

And the life in thee yearned for his life, and grew great with
desire.

And the hunger and thirst to be wounded and healed with
his dart

Made fruitful the love in thy veins and the depth of thine
heart.

And the showers out of heaven overflowing and liquid with
love 1164

Fulfilled thee with child of his godhead as rain from above.
Such desire had ye twain of each other, till molten in one

[*Ant.* 2.

Ye might bear and beget of your bodies the fruits of the
sun.

And the trees in their season brought forth and were
kindled anew

By the warmth of the moisture of marriage, the child-
bearing dew.

And the firstlings were fair of the wedlock of heaven and of
earth; 1170

All countries were bounteous with blossom and burgeon of
birth.

Green pastures of grass for all cattle, and life-giving corn;
 But here of thy bosom, here only, the man-child was born.
 All races but one are as aliens engrafted or sown,
 Strange children and changelings; but we, O our mother,
 thine own. 1175

Thy nurslings are others, and seedlings they know not of
 whom;

For these hast thou fostered, but us thou hast borne in thy
 womb.

Who is he of us all, O beloved, that owe thee for birth,
 Who would give not his blood for his birth's sake, O
 mother, O Earth?

What landsman is he that was fostered and reared of thine
 hand 1180

Who may vaunt him as we may in death though he died
 for the land?

Well doth she therefore who gives thee in guerdon
 The bloom of the life of thy giving; [*Epode.*

And thy body was bowed by no fruitless burden,
 That bore such fruit of thee living. 1185

For her face was not darkened for fear,

For her eyelids conceived not a tear,

 Nor a cry from her lips craved pity;

But her mouth was a fountain of song,

And her heart as a citadel strong 1190

 That guards the heart of the city.

MESSENGER

High things of strong-souled men that loved their land
 On brass and stone are written, and their deeds
 On high days chanted; but none graven or sung

That ever set men's eyes or spirits on fire, 1195
 Athenians, has the sun's height seen, or earth
 Heard in her depth reverberate as from heaven,
 More worth men's praise and good report of Gods
 Than here I bring for record in your ears.
 For now being come to the altar, where as priest 1200
 Death ministering should meet her, and his hand
 Seal her sweet eyes asleep, the maiden stood,
 With light in all her face as of a bride
 Smiling, or shine of festal flame by night
 Far flung from towers of triumph; and her lips 1205
 Trembled with pride in pleasure, that no fear
 Blanched them nor death before his time drank dry
 The blood whose bloom fulfilled them; for her cheeks
 Lightened, and brighter than a bridal veil
 Her hair enrobed her bosom and enrolled 1210
 From face to feet the body's whole soft length
 As with a cloud sun-saturate; then she spake
 With maiden tongue words manlike, but her eyes
 Lit mildly like a maiden's: *Countrymen,*
With more goodwill and height of happier heart 1215
I give me to you than my mother bare,
And go more gladly this great way to death
Than young men bound to battle. Then with face
 Turned to the shadowiest part of all the shrine
 And eyes fast set upon the further shade, 1220
Take me, dear Gods; and as some form had shone
 From the deep hollow shadow, some God's tongue
 Answered, *I bless you that your guardian grace*
Gives me to guard this country, takes my blood,
Your child's by name, to heal it. Then the priest 1225
 Set to the flower-sweet snow of her soft throat

The sheer knife's edge that severed it, and loosed
 From the fair bondage of so spotless flesh
 So strong a spirit; and all that girt them round
 Gazing, with souls that hung on that sad stroke, 1230
 Groaned, and kept silence after while a man
 Might count how far the fresh blood crept, and bathed
 How deep the dark robe and the bright shrine's base
 Red-rounded with a running ring that grew
 More large and duskier as the wells that fed 1235
 Were drained of that pure effluence: but the queen
 Groaned not nor spake nor wept, but as a dream
 Floats out of eyes awakening so past forth
 Ghost-like, a shadow of sorrow, from all sight
 To the inner court and chamber where she sits 1240
 Dumb, till word reach her of this whole day's end.

CHORUS

More hapless born by far [Str.
 Beneath some wintrier star,
 One sits in stone among high Lydian snows,
 The tomb of her own woes: 1245
 Yet happiest was once of the daughters of Gods, and
 divine by her sire and her lord,
 Ere her tongue was a shaft for the hearts of her sons, for the
 heart of her husband a sword.
 For she, too great of mind, [Ant.
 Grown through her good things blind,
 With godless lips and fire of her own breath 1250
 Spake all her house to death;
 But thou, no mother unmothered, nor kindled in spirit
 with pride of thy seed,

Thou hast hallowed thy child for a blameless blood-offering
and ransomed thy race by thy deed.

MESSANGER

As flower is grafted on flower, so grief on grief
Engrafted brings forth new blossoms of strange tears, 1255
Fresh buds and green fruits of an alien pain;
For now flies rumour on a dark wide wing,
Murmuring of woes more than ye knew, most like
Hers whom ye hailed most wretched; for the twain
Last left of all this house that wore last night 1260
A threefold crown of maidens, and to-day
Should let but one fall dead out of the wreath,
If mad with grief we know not and sore love
For this their sister, or with shame soul-stung
To outlive her dead or doubt lest their lives too 1265
The Gods require to seal their country safe
And bring the oracular doom to perfect end,
Have slain themselves, and fallen at the altar-foot
Lie by their own hands done to death; and fear
Shakes all the city as winds a wintering tree, 1270
And as dead leaves are men's hearts blown about
And shrunken with ill thoughts, and flowerless hopes
Parched up with presage, lest the piteous blood
Shed of these maidens guiltless fall and fix
On this land's forehead like a curse that cleaves 1275
To the unclean soul's inextinguishable hunted head
Whom his own crime tracks hotlier than a hound
To life's veiled end unsleeping; and this hour
Now blackens toward the battle that must close
All gates of hope and fear on all their hearts 1280
Who tremble toward its issue, knowing not yet

If blood may buy them surety, cleanse or soil
The helpless hands men raise and reach no stay.

CHORUS

Ill thoughts breed fear, and fear ill words; but these
The Gods turn from us that have kept their law. 1285

Let us lift up the strength of our hearts in song, [Str. 1.
And our souls to the height of the darkling day.

If the wind in our eyes blow blood for spray,
Be the spirit that breathes in us life more strong,
Though the prow reel round and the helm point wrong,
And sharp reefs whiten the shoreward way. 1291

For the steerman time sits hidden astern, [Ant. 1.
With dark hand plying the rudder of doom,

And the surf-smoke under it flies like fume
As the blast shears off and the oar-blades churn 1295
The foam of our lives that to death return,

Blown back as they break to the gulping gloom.

What cloud upon heaven is arisen, what shadow, what
sound, [Str. 2.

From the world beyond earth, from the night under-
ground,

That scatters from wings un beholden the weight of its
darkness around? 1300

For the sense of my spirit is broken, and blinded its eye,
[Ant. 2.

As the soul of a sick man ready to die,
With fear of the hour that is on me, with dread if an end be
not nigh.

O Earth, O Gods of the land, have ye heart now to see
and to hear [Str. 3.

What slays with terror mine eyesight and seals mine
ear?

O fountains of streams everlasting, are all ye not shrunk up
and withered for fear? 1306

Lo, night is arisen on the noon, and her hounds are in
quest by day, [Ant. 3.

And the world is fulfilled of the noise of them crying
for their prey,

And the sun's self stricken in heaven, and cast out of his
course as a blind man astray.

From east to west of the south sea-line [Str. 4.

Glitters the lightning of spears that shine; 1311

As a storm-cloud swoln that comes up from the skirts of the
sea

By the wind for helmsman to shoreward ferried,

So black behind them the live storm serried

Shakes earth with the tramp of its foot, and the terror to
be.

Shall the sea give death whom the land gave birth? X
[Ant. 4.

O Earth, fair mother, O sweet live Earth, 1317

Hide us again in thy womb from the waves of it, help us or
hide.

As a sword is the heart of the God thy brother,

But thine as the heart of a new-made mother, 1320

To deliver thy sons from his ravin, and rage of his tide.

O strong north wind, the pilot of cloud and rain, [Str. 5.

For the gift we gave thee what gift hast thou given us
again?

O God dark-winged, deep-throated, a terror to forthfaring
ships by night,

What bride-song is this that is blown on the blast of thy
breath? 1325

A gift but of grief to thy kinsmen, a song but of death,
For the bride's folk weeping, and woe for her father, who
finds thee against him in fight.

Turn back from us, turn thy battle, take heed of our cry;
[Ant. 5.

Let thy dread breath sound, and the waters of war be
 dry;
 Let thy strong wrath shatter the strength of our foemen,
 the sword of their strength and the shield; 1330
 As vapours in heaven, or as waves or the wrecks of ships,
 So break thou the ranks of their spears with the breath
 of thy lips,
 Till their corpses have covered and clothed as with raiment
 the face of the sword-ploughed field.
 O son of the rose-red morning, O God twin-born with the
 day, [Str. 6.
 O wind with the young sun waking, and winged for the
 same wide way, 1335
 Give up not the house of thy kin to the host thou hast
 marshalled from northward for prey.
 From the cold of thy cradle in Thrace, from the mists of
 the fountains of night, [Ant. 6.
 From the bride-bed of dawn whence day leaps laughing,
 on fire for his flight,
 Come down with their doom in thine hand on the ships
 thou hast brought up against us to fight.
 For now not in word but in deed is the harvest of spears
 begun, [Str. 7.
 And its clamour outbellows the thunder, its lightning out-
 lightens the sun. 1341
 From the springs of the morning it thunders and lightens
 across and afar
 To the wave where the moonset ends and the fall of the last
 low star.
 With a trampling of drenched red hoofs and an earthquake
 of men that meet,
 Strong war sets hand to the scythe, and the furrows take
 fire from his feet. 1345

Earth groans from her great rent heart, and the hollows of
rocks are afraid,
And the mountains are moved, and the valleys as waves in
a storm-wind swayed.
From the roots of the hills to the plain's dim verge and the
dark loud shore,
Air shudders with shrill spears crossing, and hurtling of
wheels that roar.
As the grinding of teeth in the jaws of a lion that foam as
they gnash 1350
Is the shriek of the axles that loosen, the shock of the poles
that crash.
The dense manes darken and glitter, the mouths of the
mad steeds champ,
Their heads flash blind though the battle, and death's foot
rings in their tramp.
For a fourfold host upon earth and in heaven is arrayed for
the fight,
Clouds ruining in thunder and armies encountering as
clouds in the night 1355
Mine ears are amazed with the terror of trumpets, with
darkness mine eyes,
At the sound of the sea's host charging that deafens the
roar of the sky's.
White frontlet is dashed upon frontlet, and horse against
horse reels hurled,
And the gorge of the gulfs of the battle is wide for the spoil
of the world.
And the meadows are cumbered with shipwreck of chariots
that founder on land, [Ant. 7.
And the horsemen are broken with breach as of breakers,
and scattered as sand. 1361

Through the roar and recoil of the charges that mingle
their cries and confound,
Like fire are the notes of the trumpets that flash through
the darkness of sound.
As the swing of the sea churned yellow that sways with the
wind as it swells
Is the lift and relapse of the wave of the chargers that clash
with their bells; 1365
And the clang of the sharp shrill brass through the burst of
the wave as it shocks
Rings clean as the clear wind's cry through the roar of the
surge on the rocks:
And the heads of the steeds in their headgear of war, and
their corseleted breasts,
Gleam broad as the brows of the billows that brighten the
storm with their crests,
Gleam dread as their bosoms that heave to the shipwreck-
ing wind as they rise, 1370
Filled full of the terror and thunder of water, that slays as
it dies.
So dire is the glare of their foreheads, so fearful the fire of
their breath,
And the light of their eyeballs enkindled so bright with the
lightnings of death;
And the foam of their mouths as the sea's when the jaws of
its gulf are as graves,
And the ridge of their necks as the wind-shaken mane on
the ridges of waves: 1375
And their fetlocks afire as they rear drip thick with a dew-
fall of blood
As the lips of the rearing breaker with froth of the manslay-
ing flood.

And the whole plain reels and resounds as the fields of the
sea by night

When the stroke of the wind falls darkling, and death is the
seafarer's light.

But thou, fair beauty of heaven, dear face of the day nigh
dead, [Epode.

What horror hath hidden thy glory, what hand hath
muffled thine head? 1381

O sun, with what song shall we call thee, or ward off thy
wrath by what name,

With what prayer shall we seek to thee, soothe with what
incense, assuage with what gift,

If thy light be such only as lightens to deathward the sea-
man adrift

With the fire of his house for a beacon, that foemen have
wasted with flame? 1385

Arise now, lift up thy light; give ear to us, put forth thine
hand,

Reach toward us thy torch of deliverance, a lamp for the
night of the land.

Thine eye is the light of the living, no lamp for the dead;

O, lift up the light of thine eye on the dark of our dread.

Who hath blinded thee? who hath prevailed on thee?
who hath ensnared? 1390

Who hath broken thy bow, and the shafts for thy battle
prepared?

Have they found out a fetter to bind thee, a chain for thine
arm that was bared?

Be the name of thy conqueror set forth, and the might of
thy master declared.

O God, fair God of the morning, O glory of day,

What ails thee to cast from thy forehead its garland away?
 To pluck from thy temples their chaplet enwreathed of
 the light, 1396

And bind on the brows of thy godhead a frontlet of
 night?

Thou hast loosened the necks of thine horses, and goaded
 their flanks with affright,

To the race of a course that we know not on ways that are
 hid from our sight.

As a wind through the darkness the wheels of their
 chariot are whirled, 1400

And the light of its passage is night on the face of the
 world.

And there falls from the wings of thy glory no help from
 on high,

But a shadow that smites us with fear and desire of thine
 eye.

For our hearts are as reeds that a wind on the water bows
 down and goes by,

To behold not thy comfort in heaven that hath left us un-
 timely to die. 1405

But what light is it now leaps forth on the land

Enkindling the waters and ways of the air

From thy forehead made bare,

From the gleam of thy bow-bearing hand?

Hast thou set not thy left hand again to the string, 1410

With the back-bowed horns bent sharp for a spring

And the barbed shaft drawn,

Till the shrill steel sing and the tense nerve ring

That pierces the heart of the dark with dawn,

O huntsman, O king, 1415

When the flame of thy face hath twilight in chase

As a hound hath a blood-mottled fawn?

He has glanced into golden the grey sea-strands,

And the clouds are shot through with the fires of his hands,
And the height of the hollow of heaven that he fills 1420
As the heart of a strong man is quickened and thrills:
High over the folds of the low-lying lands,

On the shadowless hills

As a guard on his watchtower he stands.
All earth and all ocean, all depth and all height, 1425
At the flash of an eyebeam are filled with his might:
The sea roars backward, the storm drops dumb,
And silence as dew on the fire of the fight
Falls kind in our ears as his face in our sight

With presage of peace to come. 1430
Fresh hope in my heart from the ashes of dread
Leaps clear as a flame from the pyres of the dead,

That joy out of woe
May arise as the spring out of tempest and snow,
With the flower-feasted month in her hands rose-red 1435
Borne soft as a babe from the bearing-bed.
Yet it knows not indeed if a God be friend,
If rescue may be from the rage of the sea,

Or the wrath of its lord have end.

For the season is full now of death or of birth, 1440
To bring forth life, or an end of all;

And we know not if anything stand or fall
That is girdled about with the round sea's girth

As a town with its wall;

But thou that art highest of the Gods most high, 1445
That art lord if we live, that art lord though we die,
Have heed of the tongues of our terror that cry

For a grace to the children of Earth.

ATHENIAN HERALD

Sons of Athens, heavy-laden with the holy weight of years,
 Be your hearts as young men's lightened of their loathlier
 load of fears; 1450
 For the wave is sunk whose thunder shoreward shook the
 shuddering lands,
 And unbreached of warring waters Athens like a sea-rock
 stands.

CHORUS

Well thy word has cheered us, well thy face and glittering
 eyes, that spake
 Ere thy tongue spake words of comfort: yet no pause
 behoves it make
 Till the whole good hap find utterance that the Gods have
 given at length. 1455

ATHENIAN HERALD

All is this, that yet the city stands unforced by stranger
 strength.

CHORUS

Sweeter sound might no mouth utter in man's ear than this
 thy word.

ATHENIAN HERALD

Feed thy soul then full of sweetness till some bitterer note
 be heard.

CHORUS

None, if this ring sure, can mar the music fallen from
 heaven as rain.

ATHENIAN HERALD

If no fire of sun or star untimely sear the tender grain. 1460

CHORUS

Fresh the dewfall of thy tidings on our hopes reflowering
lies.

ATHENIAN HERALD

Till a joyless shower and fruitless blight them, raining from
thine eyes.

CHORUS

Bitter springs have barren issues; these bedew grief's arid
sands.

ATHENIAN HERALD

Such thank-offering ask such altars as expect thy suppliant
hands.

CHORUS

Tears for triumph, wail for welfare, what strange godhead's
shrine requires? 1465

ATHENIAN HERALD

Death's or victory's be it, a funeral torch feeds all its festal
fires.

CHORUS

Like a star should burn the beacon flaming from our city's
head.

ATHENIAN HERALD

Like a balefire should the flame go up that says the king is
dead.

CHORUS

Out of heaven, a wild-haired meteor, shoots this new sign,
scattering fear.

ATHENIAN HERALD

Yea, the word has wings of fire that hovered, loth to burn
thine ear. 1470

CHORUS

From thy lips it leapt forth loosened on a shrill and
shadowy wing.

ATHENIAN HERALD

Long they faltered, fain to hide it deep as death that hides
the king.

CHORUS

Dead with him blind hope lies blasted by the lightning of
one sword.

ATHENIAN HERALD

On thy tongue truth wars with error; no man's edge hath
touched thy lord.

CHORUS

False was thine then, jangling menace like a war-steed's
brow-bound bell? 1475

ATHENIAN HERALD

False it rang not joy nor sorrow; but by no man's hand he
fell.

CHORUS

Vainly then good news and evil through so faint a trumpet
spake.

ATHENIAN HERALD

All too long thy soul yet labours, as who sleeping fain would
wake,
Waking, fain would fall on sleep again; the woe thou know-
est not yet,
When thou knowest, shall make thy memory thirst and
hunger to forget. 1480

CHORUS

Long my heart has hearkened, hanging on thy clamorous
ominous cry,
Fain yet fearful of the knowledge whence it looks to live or
die;
Now to take the perfect presage of thy dark and sidelong
flight
Comes a surer soothsayer sorrowing, sable-stoled as birds
of night.

PRAXITHEA

Man, what thy mother bare thee born to say 1485
Speak; for no word yet wavering on thy lip
Can wound me worse than thought forestalls or fear.

ATHENIAN HERALD

I have no will to weave too fine or far,
O queen, the weft of sweet with bitter speech,
Bright words with darkling; but the brief truth shown 1490
Shall plead my pardon for a lingering tongue,
Loth yet to strike hope through the heart and slay.
The sun's light still was lordly housed in heaven
When the twain fronts of war encountering smote
First fire out of the battle; but not long 1495
Had the fresh wave of windy fight begun

Heaving, and all the surge of swords to sway,
 When timeless night laid hold of heaven, and took
 With its great gorge the noon as in a gulf,
 Strangled; and thicker than the shrill-winged shafts
 Flew the fleet lightnings, held in chase through heaven 1500
 By headlong heat of thunders on their trail
 Loosed as on quest of quarry; that our host
 Smit with sick presage of some wrathful God
 Quailed, but the foe as from one iron throat 1505
 With one great sheer sole thousand-throated cry
 Shook earth, heart-staggered from their shout, and clove
 The eyeless hollow of heaven; and breached therewith
 As with an onset of strength-shattering sound
 The rent vault of the roaring noon of night 1510
 From her throned seat of usurpation rang
 Reverberate answer; such response there pealed
 As though the tide's charge of a storming sea
 Had burst the sky's wall, and made broad a breach
 In the ambient girth and bastion flanked with stars 1515
 Guarding the fortress of the Gods, and all
 Crashed now together on ruin; and through that cry
 And higher above it ceasing one man's note
 Tore its way like a trumpet: *Charge, make end,*
Charge, halt not, strike, rend up their strength by the roots, 1520
Strike, break them, make your birthright's promise sure,
Show your hearts hardier than the fenced land breeds
And souls breathed in you from no spirit of earth,
Sons of the sea's waves; and all ears that heard
 Rang with that fiery cry, that the fine air 1525
 Thereat was fired, and kindling filled the plain
 Full of that fierce and trumpet-quenching breath
 That spake the clarions silent; no glad song

For folk to hear that wist how dire a God
Begot this peril to them, what strong race 1530
Fathered the sea-born tongue that sang them death,
Threatening; so raged through the red foam of fight
Poseidon's son Eumolpus; and the war
Quailed round him coming, and our side bore back,
As a stream thwarted by the wind and sea 1535
That meet it midway mouth to mouth, and beat
The flood back of its issue; but the king
Shouted against them, crying, *O Father-God,
Source of the God my father, from thine hand
Send me what end seems good now in thy sight,* 1540
But death from mine to this man; and the word
Quick on his lips yet like a blast of fire
Blew them together; and round its lord that met
Paused all the reeling battle; two main waves
Meeting, one hurled sheer from the sea-wall back 1545
That shocks it sideways, one right in from sea
Charging, that full in face takes at one blow
That whole recoil and ruin, with less fear
Startle men's eyes late shipwrecked; for a breath,
Crest fronting crest hung, wave to wave rose poised, 1550
Then clashed, breaker to breaker; cloud with cloud
In heaven, chariot with chariot closed on earth,
One fourfold flash and thunder; yet a breath,
And with the king's spear through his red heart's root
Driven, like a rock split from its hill-side, fell 1555
Hurled under his own horsehoofs dead on earth
The sea-beast that made war on earth from sea,
Dumb, with no shrill note left of storming song,
Eumolpus; and his whole host with one stroke
Spear-stricken through its dense deep iron heart 1560

Fell hurtling from us, and in fierce recoil
 Drew seaward as with one wide wail of waves,
 Resorbed with reluctance; such a groan
 Rose from the fluctuant reflue of its ranks,
 Sucked sullen back and strengthless; but scarce yet 1565
 The steed had sprung and wheels had bruised their lord
 Fallen, when from highest height of the sundering heaven
 The Father for his brother's son's sake slain
 Sent a sheer shaft of lightning writhen and smote
 Right on his son's son's forehead, that unhelmed 1570
 Shone like the star that shines down storm, and gave
 Light to men's eyes that saw thy lord their king
 Stand and take breath from battle; then too soon
 Saw sink down as a sunset in sea-mist
 The high bright head that here in van of the earth 1575
 Rose like a headland, and through storm and night
 Took all the sea's wrath on it; and now dead
 They bring thee back by war-forsaken ways
 The strength called once thy husband, the great guard
 That was of all men, stay of all men's lives, 1580
 They bear him slain of no man but a God,
 Godlike; and toward him dead the city's gates
 Fling their arms open mother-like, through him
 Saved; and the whole clear land is purged of war.
 What wilt thou say now of this weal and woe? 1585

PRAXITHEA

I praise the Gods for Athens. O sweet Earth,
 Mother, what joy thy soul has of thy son,
 Thy life of my dead lord, mine own soul knows
 That knows thee godlike; and what grief should mine,
 What sorrow should my heart have, who behold 1590

Thee made so heavenlike happy? This alone
I only of all these blessed, all thy kind,
Crave this for blessing to me, that in theirs
Have but a part thus bitter; give me too
Death, and the sight of eyes that meet not mine. 1595
And thee too from no godless heart or tongue
Reproachful, thee too by thy living name,
Father divine, merciful God, I call,
Spring of my life springs, fountain of my stream,
Pure and poured forth to one great end with thine, 1600
Sweet head sublime of triumph and these tears,
Cephisus, if thou seest as gladly shed
Thy blood in mine as thine own waves are given
To do this great land good, to give for love
The same lips drink and comfort the same hearts, 1605
Do thou then, O my father, white-souled God,
To thy most pure earth-hallowing heart eterne
Take what thou gavest to be given for these,
Take thy child to thee; for her time is full,
For all she hath borne she hath given, seen all she had 1610
Flow from her, from her eyes and breasts and hands
Flow forth to feed this people; but be thou,
Dear God and gracious to all souls slive,
Good to thine own seed also; let me sleep,
Father; my sleepless darkling day is done, 1615
My day of life like night, but slumberless:
For all my fresh fair springs, and his that ran
In one stream's bed with mine, are all run out
Into the deep of death. The Gods have saved
Athens; my blood has brought her at their hand, 1620
And ye sit safe; be glorious and be glad
As now for all time always, countrymen,

And love my dead for ever; but me, me,
What shall man give for these so good as death?

CHORUS

From the cup of my heart I pour through my lips along
[*Str.* 1.

The mingled wine of a joyful and sorrowful song; 1625
Wine sweeter than honey and bitterer than blood that is
poured

From the chalice of gold, from the point of the two-edged
sword.

For the city redeemed should joy flow forth as a flood,
And a dirge make moan for the city polluted with blood.
1630

Great praise should the Gods have surely, my country, of
thee, [Ant. 1.

Were thy brow but as white as of old for thy sons to see,
Were thy hands as bloodless, as blameless thy cheek divine;
But a stain on it stands of the life-blood offered for thine.
What thanks shall we give that are mixed not and marred
with dread 1635

For the price that has ransomed thine own with thine own
child's head?

For a taint there cleaves to the people redeemed with
blood, [Str. 2.

And a plague to the blood-red hand.

The rain shall not cleanse it, the dew nor the sacred flood
That blesses the glad live land. 1640

In the darkness of earth beneath, in the world without
sun, [Ant. 2.

The shadows of past things reign;
And a cry goes up from the ghost of an ill deed done,
And a curse for a virgin slain.

ATHENA

Hear, men that mourn, and woman without mate, 1645
Hearken; ye sick of soul with fear, and thou
Dumb-stricken for thy children; hear ye too,
Earth, and the glory of heaven, and winds of the air,
And the most holy heart of the deep sea,
Late wroth, now full of quiet; hear thou, sun, 1650
Rolled round with the upper fire of rolling heaven
And all the stars returning; hills and streams,
Springs and fresh fountains, day that seest these deeds,
Night that shalt hide not; and thou child of mine,
Child of a maiden, by a maid redeemed, 1655
Blood-guiltless, though bought back with innocent blood,
City mine own; I Pallas bring thee word,
I virgin daughter of the most high God
Give all you charge and lay command on all
The word I bring be wasted not; for this 1660
The Gods have stablished and his soul hath sworn,
That time nor earth nor changing sons of man
Nor waves of generations, nor the winds
Of ages risen and fallen that steer their tides
Through light and dark of birth and lovelier death 1665
From storm toward haven inviolable, shall see
So great a light alive beneath the sun
As the awless eye of Athens; all fame else
Shall be to her fame as a shadow in sleep
To this wide noon at waking; men most praised 1670
In lands most happy for their children found
Shall hold as highest of honours given of God
To be but likened to the least of thine,
Thy least of all, my city; thine shall be
The crown of all songs sung, of all deeds done 1675

Thine the full flower for all time; in thine hand
 Shall time be like a sceptre, and thine head
 Wear worship for a garland; nor one leaf
 Shall change or winter cast out of thy crown
 Till all flowers wither in the world; thine eyes 1680
 Shall first in man's flash lightning liberty,
 Thy tongue shall first say freedom; thy first hand
 Shall loose the thunder terror as a hound
 To hunt from sunset to the springs of the sun
 Kings that rose up out of the populous east 1685
 To make their quarry of thee, and shall strew
 With multitudinous limbs of myriad herds
 The foodless pastures of the sea, and make
 With wrecks immeasurable and unsummed defeat
 One ruin of all their many-folded flocks 1690
 Ill shepherded from Asia; by thy side
 Shall fight thy son the north wind, and the sea
 That was thine enemy shall be sworn thy friend
 And hand be struck in hand of his and thine
 To hold faith fast for aye; with thee, though each 1695
 Make war on other, wind and sea shall keep
 Peace, and take truce as brethern for thy sake
 Leagued with one spirit and single-hearted strength
 To break thy foes in pieces, who shall meet
 The wind's whole soul and might of the main sea 1700
 Full in their face of battle, and become
 A laughter to thee; like a shower of leaves
 Shall their long galleys rank by staggering rank
 Be dashed adrift on ruin, and in thy sight
 The sea deride them, and that lord of the air 1705
 Who took by violent hand thy child to wife
 With his loud lips bemock them, by his breath

Swept out of sight of being; so great a grace
Shall this day give thee, that makes one in heart
With mine the deep sea's godhead, and his son 1710
With him that was thine helmsman, king with king,
Dead man with dead; only such names as these
Shalt thou call royal, take none else or less
To hold of men in honour; but with me
Shall these be worshipped as one God, and mix 1715
With mine the might of their mysterious names
In one same shrine served singly, thence to keep
Perpetual guard on Athens; time and change,
Masters and lords of all men, shall be made
To thee that knowest no master and no lord 1720
Servants; the days that lighten heaven and nights
That darken shall be ministers of thine
To attend upon thy glory, the great years
As light-engraven letters of thy name
Writ by the sun's hand on the front of the earth 1725
For world-beholden witness; such a gift
For one fair chaplet of three lives enwreathed
To hang for ever from thy storied shrine,
And this thy steersman fallen with tiller in hand
To stand for ever at thy ship's helm seen, 1730
Shall he that bade their threefold flower be shorn
And laid him low that planted, give thee back
In sign of sweet land reconciled with sea
And heavenlike earth with heaven; such promise-pledge
I daughter without mother born of God 1735
To the most woful mother born of man
Plight for continual comfort. Hail, and live
Beyond all human hap of mortal doom
Happy; for so my sire hath sworn and I.

PRAXITHEA

O queen Athena, from a heart made whole 1740
 Take as thou givest us blessing; never tear
 Shall stain for shame nor groan untune the song
 That as a bird shall spread and fold its wings
 Here in thy praise for ever, and fulfil
 The whole world's crowning city crowned with thee 1745
 As the sun's eye fulfils and crowns with sight
 The circling crown of heaven. There is no grief
 Great as the joy to be made one in will
 With him that is the heart and rule of life
 And thee, God born of God; thy name is ours, 1750
 And thy large grace more great than our desire.

CHORUS

From the depth of the springs of my spirit a fountain is
 poured of thanksgiving,
 My country, my mother, for thee,
 That thy dead for their death shall have life in thy sight
 and a name everliving
 At heart of thy people to be. 1755
 In the darkness of change on the waters of time they shall
 turn from afar
 To the beam of this dawn for a beacon, the light of these
 pyres for a star.
 They shall see thee who love and take comfort, who hate
 thee shall see and take warning,
 Our mother that makest us free;
 And the sons of thine earth shall have help of the waves
 that made war on their morning, 1760
 And friendship and fame of the sea.

Swinburne's Atalanta in Calydon and Erechtheus

NOTES

ATALANTA IN CALYDON

THE PLAY

The *Atalanta* is a romantic tragedy based on the plot of a lost play of Euripides, "The Meleager," put together in Aeschylean, rather than Euripidean form, with chorus motivation somewhat resembling that of the *Agamemnon*, and with chorus and rhesis themes that accept the faith of Aeschylus but present it in the Euripidean manner. It is long, moves rapidly and unerringly; is full of the atmosphere of the epic, to which it owes a great deal. It progresses with an air of certainty that suggests the inevitable working out of the laws of destiny. The hunters have gathered to destroy a divine monster that has been ravaging the land for a long time. No sudden call has gathered them; they have had time to deliberate on the seriousness of the situation which the ill will of the daughter of Zeus and Leto has brought about. And this situation is just as momentous as that in which the son of Zeus and Leto fired his arrows at the camp of the Danaans because they had dishonored his priest. We have the epic catalogue, the pictures, the real Homeric combat with its naive and almost ludicrous incidents, and the death lament unsurpassed by anything of the kind in literature. Although the play owes much to many writers, it is more characteristic of Swinburne than much of the work of his later years.

THE PROLOGUE

The prologue of the *Atalanta in Calydon* is a monologue in the form of a prayer, piled so high with the timber of rhetoric that the idea of supplication is almost obliterated, smothered completely in the gorgeous 'raiment of

words.' It is in characteristic Euripidean form, although this form Aeschylus has made use of; but in content it is neither Euripidean, with its interminable genealogies, nor Aeschylean with its brief, strongly written prelude, as in the Agamemnon. But it is structurally interesting and in itself unique.

The speaker is the chief huntsman, who speaks and disappears, not to return. In the Agamemnon we have an instance of the same thing; the watchman explains his business; he is waiting for the beacon. When it appears he gives the alarm, dances a prelude to his joy, expresses a hope of holding again in his own his master's hand, drops a word or two of ill-omen and then goes his way. In Euripides the character who speaks the prologue and disappears is generally a god who gives the history of the case and goes out, leaving nothing new to be expected. In the Hippolytus it is Cypris; in the Ion, Hermes; in the Alcestis, Apollo; and in the Daughters of Troy, Poseidon.

The prayer of the chief huntsman falls into three divisions: first he greets Artemis, the diva triformis, and after taking up eight lines to characterize her, he makes known his wants;—'Hear thou and help, and lift no violent hands,' and closes with a Homeric commonplace; the outcome lies on the knees of the gods. This is a little ominous, as we know that the gods give no unmixed blessings to mortals. Next he greets the fair-faced sun, killer (Apollo) of stars; and last, the virgin Artemis. He prays for good speed for his hounds and for each man good luck, and he prays to the divinities potent to give him luck, with a reverence and an intensity that fully satisfy all Aeschylean demands. This hunt motif with its reference to the hand of the goddess that is mortal to all things fleet that roar and range, and to Apollo, who slays the stars, is

echoed in the first line of the parodos: When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces," etc.

Instead of the Euripidean genealogy we get a multiplication of attributes. The speaker prays the fair-faced sun, killer of stars, to rise up, shine, stretch thine hand out, touch heaven with thy bow, burn, break the dark, shoot it through with arrows; let thy hair lighten as flame, let thine eyes fill the world, let thy lips kindle with swift beams, let earth laugh, let the sea and winds and fountains and each horn of Achelous, and green Euenus laugh; for in fair time thou comest.

With Artemis he is just as generous. He makes a very clever transition from the goddess to Atalanta, which naturally suggests the chorus of maidens bringing fresh locks of hair, clean offerings, chaste hymns. Then with a very noticeable drop in intensity, characteristic of Greek, he excuses himself, saying:

me the time
Divides from these things; whom do thou not less
Help and give honor, and to mine hounds good speed,
And edge to spears and luck to each man's hand.

Separated from its erudition it does fulfill the requirements of a prologue; that is, 'it connects the action of the drama (the hunt, the slaying of the boar, and consequent events) with previous events which explain the situation of the dramatis personae at the time when the play begins.' (The land devastated and folk depressed because of the ravages of the boar.)

It should be noticed that the speaker addressed Artemis in the character of the diva triformis, then Apollo, and last, Apollo's sister Artemis, this time by name. In

a similar manner, Aeschylus, in the Septem, 130 makes the chorus greet Pallas as

Διογενὲς φιλόμαχον κράτος,
Δυσίπολις γενοῦ, Παλλὰς

and after addressing other gods and goddesses, returns to her and addresses her with another characterization, 164

σύ τε', μάκαιρ' ἄνασσ' Ὀγκᾶ, πρὸ πόλεως
ἐπτάπυλον ἔδος ἐπιρρύου

In addition it might be noted that the watchman in the Agamemnon and the chief huntsman in the Atalanta have much in common, in spite of the great difference in their language. They are both awaiting the events of the day. Both speak in astronomical terms; both emphasize the idea of luck, fortune, τύχη. But the difference in style is very great. The watchman's speech is rough; almost ridiculously homely. We have repetitions and antithesis, and dark hints and homely metaphors from watchdogs, drugs, dicing, oxen; (See Sidgwick, Ag. 17, note.) he speaks a word of hope with an air of misgiving. The mood is low-pitched and in striking contrast with the awful tragedy that impends. Swinburne's tone is in the stretches of trembling heaven so high that we are driven to marvel at what shriek must follow to maintain consistency in the development of the drama.

THE CHORUSES OF THE ATALANTA

Swinburne manipulates his chorus in the Aeschylean rather than in the Sophoclean or Euripidean manner; that is, he emphasizes its lyrical importance and its independence of the dialogue. In no instance does it allude to the coming episode or the entrance of a character, as is frequently the case in Sophocles and Euripides. It lifts its song to a power higher than that appearing in the action of the play, and is therefore in its lyrical aspect purely symbolical. But in addition to this lyrical function it often serves as a character in the dialogue, and in such cases its attitude is that of an actor and not at all pitched to its lyrical mood.

Swinburne, like Aeschylus, evidently wished to keep the stage free of actors during the song of the chorus. This he has indicated in his text in all but one instance, which will be commented on in its proper place.

The speaker of the prologue introduces the chorus and immediately excuses himself with the words:

but me the time
Divides from these things;

Althaea and the chorus take up the first episode, and as the first stasimon is about to begin she excuses herself just as the speaker in the prologue had done:

And now before these gather to the hunt,
I will go arm my son and bring him forth,
Lest love or some man's anger work him harm.

For just such a reason Atossa leaves the stage in Aes. Per., 849, where the purpose is voiced in three lines at the very end of the speech.

(But I will go, and taking from my halls
Fine raiment will essay to meet my son,
And not betray our dear one though ill-starred.)

In the second episode Althaea, Meleager, Oeneus, and the chorus occupy the stage where they seem to remain through the singing of the second stasimon, which takes up and develops the love theme that was the real motive of Althaea's sermon on the law. Swinburne may have been unable to find a motive for the removal of the actors, but it is probable that he wished Meleager to hear the lyric treatment of the love theme, while Althaea remained to observe its effect on her son.

At the close of the third episode Oeneus dismisses the throng and sends the hunters on their way:

but ye, depart with her
In peace and reverence, each with blameless eye
Following his fate; exalt your hands and hearts,
Strike, cease not, arrow on arrow and wound on wound,
And go with gods and with the gods return.

At the beginning of the fourth episode Althaea enters with the words:

I heard within the house the cry of news
And came forth—

She hears the herald's account of the slaying of the boar and at its conclusion leaves to offer sacrifice to the prosperous gods. That this sacrifice was not offered on the stage is shown by the words of the chorus when it answers the query of the messenger as to the whereabouts of the queen with

Lo, she comes forth as from thank-offering made.

At the close of this episode, after she has learned of the death of her brothers, she greets the fates who have come to visit her a second time:

Lo ye, who stand and weave between the doors,
There; and blood drips from hand and thread, and stains

Threshold and raiment and me passing in
Flecked with the sudden sanguine drops of death.

Her motive for leaving was of course the burning of the brand.

At the close of the lament of the chorus she cries:

Ho, ye that wail, and ye that sing, make way
Till I be come among you.

At the conclusion of her last speech the chorus, in two divisions, sings of her as if she were off the stage, but at the close of the last stanza the second messenger enters saying:

Queen, and you maidens, there is come on us
A thing more deadly than the face of death;
Meleager the good lord is as one slain.

The fact that Meleager twice addresses his mother, once during the kommos and once during his last speech, shows that she remained through the death scene although she had resolved, at the close of the last episode, never to speak again.

Considered in their structural aspect the choruses of the *Atalanta* display great variety. There is the Euripidean lightness of touch, the serenity and repose of Sophocles, and the pulsing flow of Aeschylus, swelling at times to a torrent. In every instance we find a mood created to suit the dramatic situation that it introduces; and in every instance the nexus is close,—as close and exact as the best examples in Greek tragedy. Althaea's long rhesis on her son suggests the choric song of creation; Meleager dominates the next scene, upon which follows the strain of love the destroyer; *Atalanta* appears and after her comes the chorus of infatuation; the boar is

slain and naturally enough we listen to the sylvan flutes breathing freedom from care. Theme follows theme without a waver in their directness.

The preponderance of aesthetic effect is Aeschylean, but the ethical is quite often Euripidean. The cynical, sophisticated pessimism of Althaea is not felt in the parodos nor does it appear in the first episode, where the chorus makes her acquaintance; but its chords begin to color the harmony of the creation chorus, they ring loud in the love chorus and reach a wild crescendo and climax in the chorus of infatuation. There is little of the Aeschylean theme that the doer must suffer, that evil begets offspring of its kind, and that the houses of the pious are immune from the thunder. The ritual of the Atalanta makes us shudder at the sinister resentment of the gods against their puppet, man.

THE PARODOS

The parodos is a beautiful invocation to Artemis, written in very rapid anapests, in definite stanza form. The chorus of young maidens is announced by the speaker of the prologue, who turns over to them the task of sacrificing to Artemis. They come to offer to the daughter of Leto chaste hymns and flowers and locks of their hair.

This chorus is unique; there is nothing just like it in literature, ancient or modern. Its dominant note is splendor and speed, and it lives up to its theme as few others do. Not once is it forgotten until we lose sight of

"the feet that scare
The wolf that follows, the fawn that flies."

It is un-Aeschylean in both movement and mood. Although its burden is Artemis, it might well come, *Διώνυσον κατάγουσαι*, inspired by the strange breath of the

Bacchae. We find in the choruses of that play the same swiftness, joined with the same breathless seriousness. The flashes of beauty and the note of delight in the days of youth, symbolized in pictures from many myths, leave the final impression of sadness characteristic of the Greek contemplation of such scenes.

In it are many individual lines suggested by the Greek, many images and allusions; but these seem to pour from the author's mind in a molten stream, to be moulded into a form as original as anything in our language.

The classical reminiscences are from many sources. In "The mother of months" there is a suggestion of

πότνια Δημήτηρ, ὠρηφόρε, ἀγλαόδωρε,

Spring with its lisp of leaves and ripple of rain is an echo of

nam seu mobilibus veris inhorruit
Adventus foliis—Hor. O. 1, 23, 5

The story of the brown bright nightingale is a commonplace in classical poetry. Cf. Ovid, Met. 6, 424 ff.; Homer, Od. 19, 518 ff.

Horace, O. 4, 12, 5
Nidum ponit, Ityn flebiliter gemens,
infelix avis it Cecropiae domus
aeternum opprobrium

οἷά τις ξουθὰ
ἀκόρετος βοᾷς, φεῦ, ταλαίλαις φρεσὶν
Ἴτυν, Ἴτυν στένουσ' ἀμφιθαλῇ κακοῖς
ἀηδῶν βλον Aesch. Ag. 1142 ff.

(As the dusky nightingale sings
Insatiate of lament, alas, from her soul's dark springs
Moaning of Itys, Itys, as down through her life she goes
Where sorrow for blossom blows.)

τὸν ἔμδν καὶ σὸν πολὺδακρυν Ἴτυν
ἐλελιζομένη διεροῖς μέλεσιν
γέννος ξουθῆς Aristoph. Av. 212 ff.

The characterization of Artemis reads like a crystalization from several sources.

τάς τε πυρφόρους
Ἄρτεμιδος αἴγλας, ξὺν αἷς Λύκι' ὄρεα διᾶσσει Soph. O. R.206

(And the flashing fires of Artemis wherewith she glances
through the Lycian hills.)

Come with bows bent and with emptying of quivers,
Maiden most perfect, lady of light,
With a noise of winds and many rivers,
With a clamor of waters and with might.

As goddess of the chase, we find her characterized,

ἦ κατ' ὄρη σκιδόντα καὶ ἄκριας ἡγεμοέσσας
ἄγρη τερπουμένη παγχρύσεια τόξα τιταίνει
πέμπουσα στονόντα βέλη H. 27, 4

τρομέει δὲ κάρηνα
ὑψηλῶν ὀρέων, ἰάχει δ' ἐπὶ δάσκιας ὕλη
δεινὸν ἀπὸ κλαγγῆς θηρῶν, φρίσσει δὲ τε γαῖα. H. 27, 73

As lady of light she brandishes two torches,

διπύρους ἀνέχουσα λαμπάδας, Aristoph. Ran. 1362
Ἄρτεμιν ἀμφίπυρον Trach. 214. See Jebb, O. T. 207-8

She is also called σελασφόρος, φωσφόρος,

Bind on thy sandals, O thou most fleet,
Over the splendor and speed of thy feet"

is a Homeric reminiscence. Cf. Il. 2, 44

ποσσὶ δ' ὑπὸ λιπαροῖσι ἐδήσατο καλὰ πέδιλα

88-95 is an allusion to the Song of Songs, 2, 10-13

For the winter rains and ruins are over,
 And all the seasons of snows and sins;
 The days dividing lover and lover,
 The light that loses, the night that wins;
 And time remembered is grief forgotten,
 And frosts are slain and flowers begotten,
 And in green underwood and cover
 Blossom by blossom the spring begins.

Cf. My beloved spake and said unto me,

Rise up my love, my fair one and come away.
 For lo, the winter is past,
 The rain is over and gone;
 The flowers appear on the earth,
 The time of the singing of birds is come,
 And the voice of the turtle is heard in the land;
 The fig tree ripeneth her green figs,
 And the vines are in blossom,
 They give forth their fragrance.
 Arise my love, my fair one and come away.

"Ripe grasses trammel a traveling foot"

as in Horace, Ep. 2, 22 modo in tenaci gramine

"The faint fresh flame of the young year flushes" etc.

is the Pindaric φοινικανθέμου ἦρος ἀκμῇ
 or better, φοινικοεάνων ὁπότε οἰχθέντος Ὀρᾶν θαλάμου

εὐδομον ἐπάγησιν ἔαρ φυτὰ νεκτάρεια

And the oat is heard above the lyre
 ἀχέϊ τ' ὀμφαῖ μελέων σὺν αὐλαῖς,
 ἀχέϊ τε Σεμέλαν ἐλικάμπυκα χοροί.

This whole fragment of Pindar (75) is interesting in connection with this ode; it has left its color in more than one place.

And Pan by noon and Bacchus by night,
 Fleeter of foot than the fleet-foot kid
 Follows with dancing and fills with delight
 The Maenad and the Bassarid.

This passage finds an echo in many places. cf.

πάτερ Θέοινε, Μαινάδων ζευκτήριε	Aes. fr. 350
νύμφαις οὐρείαις συμπαίξων	Arist. Av. 1098
νύμφα ὀρεσιβάτα που πληθείς'	Soph. O. R. 1100
ἐξαλύξας δίχεται νέβρου δίκην	Aesch. Eurn. 111
οἰνώπα βάκχον εἶλον,	
Μαινάδων ὁμόστολον	Soph. O. T. 211

In the next there is a fine Horatian reminiscence.

And soft as lips that laugh and hide,
 The laughing leaves of the trees divide
 And screen from seeing and leave in sight
 The god pursuing, the maiden hid.

Nunc et campus et areae
 lenesque sub noctem susurri
 Composita repetantur hora
 nunc et latentis proditor intimo
 Gratus puellae risus ab angulo Hor. O. 1, 9, 18

The following picture is about the finest in the whole collection.

The ivy falls with the Bacchanal's hair
 Over her eyebrows, hiding her eyes;
 The wild vine slipping down leaves bare
 Her bright breast shortening into sighs

For a similar picture of the runner weakening and finally falling from weariness see Eurip. Bac. 135 ff.

O trance of rapture when, reeling aside,
 From the Bacchanal rout o'er the mountains flying
 One sinks to the earth, and the fawn's flecked hide
 Covers him lying.

The Euripidean pictures fit more nearly the life and action of the Swinburnian; cf. *Ion*, 716 f. for Bacchus sporting with the nymphs:

(Where Bacchus uptossing the pines flame-glaring,
Leaps mid his Bacchantes through darkness that roam.)

also *Bacchae*, 306 ff.

Yet shalt thou see him even on Delphi's crags
With pine brands leaping o'er the cloven crest,
Tossing on high and waving Bacchus' bough.

See also *Ion*, 492 ff.; *Phoen.* 226 ff.

One sees in this ode the radiancy and rush of an Euripidean chorus, and the characteristic Euripidean pictures, quite suggestive but not too definite, and at times somewhat diffuse. The purpose of the ode, however, is Aeschylean. It is in reality a hymn, an appeal to the great goddess who governs the wilds, who has sent the boar and who is going to destroy him now at the hands of Meleager. This is made clear at the close of the prologue, when the chorus is announced as coming with "clean offering, chaste hymns." And this hymn is perfectly suited to the powers that inspired it. It follows very naturally the prayer of the chief huntsman, and it develops the same theme, which is exalted by the chorus to a higher plane.

FIRST EPISODE

The first episode is low-pitched in tone. After the eloquence of the prologue and the radiancy of the parodos, comes the wise, sombre, and pessimistic Althaea. She begins at once to undermine the reverence of the chorus and in the stasimon that follows, her influence is distinctly felt. The stichomythia between Althaea and the chorus

is wonderfully well constructed. Put all the lines of the chorus in a paragraph, and we get one point of view; Althaea's speeches treated in the same way, give us the other.

Chorus: 1 Yet one doth well, being patient of the gods.
 2 But when time spreads, find out some herb for it.
 3 What ails thee to be jealous of their ways?
 4 They have their will; much talking mends it not.
 5 Have they not given life and the end of life?

Althaea: 1 Yea, lest they smite us with some four-foot plague.
 2 And with their healing herbs infect our blood.
 3 What if they give us poisonous drinks for wine?
 4 And gall for milk, and cursing for a prayer?
 5 Lo, where they heal, they help not.

She then introduces the love theme, love the destroyer, which she develops in the long rhesis, after which she introduces and develops, in the same speech, the episode of the three weaving women, the Fate motif of the play. This is introduced by a dream and dismissed by another, after which she comments on the gods and their ways, and the wisdom of her mother, closing by announcing that she must go to arm her son.

FIRST STASIMON

CREATION OF MAN AND THE VANITY OF LIFE

After Althaea has indulged in a rather long and sentimental rhesis in quite Euripidean manner on the infancy of her son, the chorus sings its song of creation. Classical and Biblical thought are blended in one quivering mass. This is one of the finest things that Swinburne ever did. The movement is unerring and the compression remarkable. Noteworthy is the list of high gods and the material

with which they worked. The chorus begins now to show the influence of Althaea, who provoked it by her theme of mother-love in the last speech of the first episode. Its outlook on life is full of Euripidean bitterness and pessimism. Time brings us but sorrow, every hour has its grief; for all of us pleasure is mixed with pain; we are impotent to control our life, the best we can do is to choose the lesser evil. Once dead, we are gone, (fr. 507) the bond with the living is broken (fr. 532), what is under earth is really nothing (Iph. Aul. 1251, fr. 633).

In their very act of creating, the gods are sinister in their attitude towards man. He sows but shall not reap, he weaves to be clothed in derision, and he endures for a span in travail and sorrow; Surely to live is to suffer (Eur. fr. 966). The last quatrain is steeped in all the pessimism of the ages. For the myth see Plato. Prot. XI.

SECOND EPISODE

The second episode presents Althaea and her son. He comes out with her, armed for the hunt. While waiting for the throng that is gathering they regard and comment on the prominent characters to be seen from their outlook. The scene is based on the famous passage in the *Iliad*, 3, 166-244. Althaea asks him to name the men whom he recognizes. He replies that on account of the distance he can recognize but few. But he does mention Peleus, the sons of Leda, Telamon, Ancaeus, and her own brothers, Toxeus and the violent-souled Plexippus. The descriptions of most of these are taken from the *Meleager* of Euripides. In technique the passage is very similar to that of the *Iliad*. Priam calls Helen to look at her former husband. He then asks her the name of an Achaeon

warrior. As she replies to his questions the old man becomes pensive and reminiscent. In the same manner Althaea comments on the characters mentioned by Meleager. A passage of stichomythia leads to Althaea's great sermon on the law, which has been discussed elsewhere. Her son reminds her that he is not a child, but has been a leader in the great expedition for the fleece. Oeneus interrupts, to be silenced by his wife, who then indulges in tender recollections of her son's infancy. Meleager, driven to it by his mother, makes the one vain speech of his life. Here follows the great Eros Tyrannus chorus.

SECOND STASIMON

EROS TYRANNUS

The Eros Tyrannus chorus holds the center of the play. The lyric parts that precede it are the parodos and the stasimon on the creation and stultification of man, who is so temperamentally endowed as to become an easy victim of the delusion that is now to fall upon him. From the episodes that follow these two choruses we have learned something of the character of Althaea and her attitude towards her son and the woman for whom he is to go to his ruin. She has in a very insistent manner enforced the idea that for wise men as for fools, love is one thing, an evil thing; and that her son's only chance of happiness lies in submitting his soul to fate, and setting his eyes and heart on high-born hopes and abstinence divine. To all of which her son plays slight heed, οὐ γὰρ ἐμπιθῆς; and that too in face of the fact that what she is insisting upon has been the practice of hunters from time immemorial and is still to be observed in semi-savage tribes today. (See Frazer, *The Golden Bough*.)

The song is a fitting prelude for the entrance of the woman herself; while the contrast between the baneful and resistless might of Persuasion, ἡ τάλαινα Πειθώ, and the Beautiful Atalanta with her maidenly reserve and goddess-like imperturbability is very strong.

The chorus is very long,—longer than the great Aeschylean chorus in the *Agamemnon*, which it follows rather closely in its progressive piling up of horrors, from which there is but one escape. But in his characterization of Love Swinburne was not content with Aeschylean material. He foraged the whole field of Greek literature and added a reminiscence of Lucretius besides. His Eclectic method owes much to Aeschylus, particularly in the sombre progressive cumulation of the mood, as well as in the anapestic beginning; it owes much to Euripides both in actual material and the disposition of it. Euripides, *Hippol.* 527 ff. uses half of his chorus in the characterization of Love and the remainder in citing concrete examples from the myths to show its application. Swinburne has closed his chorus in just this manner, which has the effect of a slight anticlimax. The myth, found in *Odyssey* 11, 235 ff., is not so well chosen to exemplify the horror of such things as the two employed by Euripides, particularly the story of Iole, whose beauty had aroused the passion of Heracles and led him to destroy her father's city. For similar use of myth, showing ill-fated maidens, see Euripides *Helen*, 375 ff. The great Love chorus in the *Antigone* has also contributed its share to both the thought and the rhythm.

Throughout the entire poem Swinburne maintains the direct address, just as Sophocles has done, but his method of composition is more diffuse than that of Euripides at his worst. Throughout the interminable series of horrors we find few that give a clear Aeschylean picture.

In the anapestic introduction there is some confusion between the winged Eros and the Aphrodite of the passion and gratification of love; but after this, the whole address is directed to the mother. Nowhere is Swinburne's power of assimilation and manipulation of material shown to better advantage. And here it is interesting to note that the first couplet echoes a biblical idea, Song of Songs, 4, 1-2.

Behold thou art fair, my love, behold thou art fair;
Thine eyes are as doves behind thy veil.

There is a Sapphic intensity in

Thou art swift and subtle and blind as a flaming fire,
Before thee the laughter, behind thee the tears of desire.

οὔτε γὰρ πυρὸς οὔτ' ἄστρων ὑπέρ' ἕτερον βέλος οἶον τὸ τᾶς
'Αφροδίτας

Eur. Hup. 530.

The rest of the introductory stanza reads like the description of a vase-painting.

The idea of the evil blossom born of sea-foam is old, a Greek commonplace met first in Hom. H. 5. For the idea of evil, compare Euripides, Hipp. 764 ff.,

ἀνθ' ὧν οὐχ ὀσίων ἐρώ-
των δεινῇ φρένας Ἀφροδί-
τας νόσφ' κατεκλάσθη.

Aphrodite resents being called by Hippolytus *κακίστην δαιμόνων πεφυκέναι* (Hipp. 13) and under her *κέντροις ἔρωτος* the heart of Phaedra bleeds to death. Love is a bitter flower from the bud, just as Helen found it, a *δηξίθυμον ἔρωτος ἄνθος*, and Phaedra's nurse assured her, *ἡδιστον, ὦ παῖ, ταῦτόν ἀλγεινὸν θ' ἄμα*.

The origin of the evil blossom born of sea-foam and the frothing of blood is given in full in Hesiod, Theog. 176–200, where reference is also made to Eros. The stanza beginning

The weft of the world was untorn
That is woven of the day on the night—

shows very skillful handling on Swinburne's part. Cf. Theog. 176 ff.

ἦλθε δὲ νύκτ' ἐπάγων μέγας Οὐρανός, ἀμφὶ δὲ Γαίῃ
ἱμείρων φιλότῃτος ἐπέσχετο καὶ μ' ἐτανύσθη
πάντῃ κ.τ.λ.

The Homeric hymn to Aphrodite 2–6 shows that she subdued the whole world of animal life.

καὶ τ' ἑδαμάσσετο φύλα καταβηγῶν ἀνθρώπων
οἰωνούς τε διυπετέας καὶ θηρία πάντα,
ἦ μὲν ὅσ' ἡπειρος πολλὰ τρέφει ἥδ' ὅσα πόντος
παῖσιν δ' ἔργα μέμηλεν ἐυστεφάνου Κυθереΐης.

There is a Lucretian note in the line

And in air the clamorous birds

while the next idea springs from the Homeric *μέρορες ἄνθρωποι* which Swinburne handles almost jocosely;

Sweet articulate words
Sweetly divided apart.

The remainder of the stanza is Homeric. The next, however is clearly after Hesiod.

For all they said upon earth,
She is fair, she is white like a dove,
And the life of the world in her breath
Breathes, and is born at her birth;
For they knew thee for mother of love
And they knew thee not mother of death.

Cf. Theogony 192 ff.

First she drew near holy Cythera, and from there, afterwards, she came to sea-girt Cyprus, and came forth an awful and lovely goddess, and grass grew up about her beneath her shapely feet. Her gods and men call Aphrodite, and the foam-born goddess and rich-crowned Cytherea, because she grew amid the foam, and Cytherea because she reached Cythera, and Cyprogenes because she was born in billowy Cyprus, and Philommedes because she sprang from the members. And with her went Eros and comely Desire followed her at her birth at the first and as she went into the assembly of the gods. This honor she has from the beginning, and this is the portion allotted to her among men and undying gods—the whisperings of maidens and smiles and deceits with sweet delight and love and graciousness.”

And for Love the fair destroyer see also Hesiod, Theog. 120

ἦδ' Ἔρος, ὃς κάλλιστος ἐν ἀθάνατοις θεοῖσι,
 λυσιμελής, πάντων δὲ θεῶν πάντων δ' ἀνθρώπων
 δάμναται ἐν στήθεσσι νόον καὶ ἐπίφρονα βουλήν.

Swinburne's Aphrodite resembles Hesiod's Pandora.

Hes. works 57 ff. Zeus, indignant at the theft of fire, tells Prometheus of his intended revenge: “But I will give men as the price of fire an evil thing in which they all be glad of heart while they embrace their own destruction.” So woman was made. Golden Aphrodite shed grace upon her head and cruel longing and cares that weary the limbs. And Athena girded and

What hadst thou to do being born
 Mother, when winds were at
 [ease
 As a flower of the springtime of
 [corn,
 A flower of the foam of the seas?,
 For bitter thou wast from thy
 [birth,
 Aphrodite, a mother of strife;
 For before thee some rest was on
 [earth,

clothed her, and the divine graces and queenly Persuasion put necklaces of gold upon her, and the rich-haired hours crowned her head with spring blossoms. And Pallas Athena decked her form with all manner of finery. And the Guide, the Slayer of Argus, contrived within her lies and crafty words and a deceitful nature at the will of loud-thundering Zeus, and the herald of the gods put speech in her. And he called this woman Pandora, because all they who dwelt on Olympus gave each a gift, a plague to men who eat bread.

But when he had finished the sheer hopeless snare, the father sent glorious Argus-Slayer, the swift messenger of the gods, to take it to Epimetheus as a gift. . . But he took the gift, and afterwards, when the evil thing was already his, he understood.

For before this the tribes of men lived on earth remote and free from ills and hard toil and heavy sicknesses which bring the fates upon men. . . Now the earth is full of evils and the sea is full.

A little respite from tears,
A little pleasure of life;
For life was not then as thou art,
But as one that waxeth in years
Sweet-spoken, a fruitful wife;
Earth had no thorn, and desire
No sting, neither death any [dart;
What hadst thou to do among [these,
Thou, clothed with a burning [fire,
Thou, sprung from the seed of [the seas
As an ear from a seed of corn,
As a brand plucked forth of a [pyre,
As a ray shed forth oft he morn, [etc.

See also Theog. 573 ff.

For the vernal beauty of Aphrodite,

When winds were at ease,
As a flower of the spring time of corn,
As a flower of the foam of the seas,

see *Cypria* 1 ff.

She clothed herself with garments which the graces and hours had made for her and dyed in the flowers of spring—such flowers as the seasons wear—in crocus and hyacinth and flourishing violet and the rose's lovely bloom, so sweet and delicious, and heavenly buds, the flowers of the narcissus and lily. In such perfumed garments is Aphrodite clothed at all seasons.

For the desolation of cities because of Love the destroyer see Euripides, *Troades*, particularly the choruses 511–570 and 799–860 also 1060–1120. Quite in Swinburnian manner is 1071–80.

Thine altars are cold; and the blithesome calling
Of the dancers is hushed; nor at twilight's falling
To the nightlong vigil of gods cometh walking.
They are vanished, thy carven images golden,
And the twelve moon-feasts of the Phrygians holden.
Dost thou care, O King, I muse, heart-aching,—
Thou who sittest on high in the far blue heaven
Enthroned,—that my city to ruin is given
That the bands of her strength is the fire-blast breaking.

O my beloved, O husband mine,
Thou art dead and unburied thou wanderest yonder
Unwashen,—but me shall the keel through the brine
Waft, onward sped by its pinions of pine,
To the horse-land Argos, where that stone wonder
Of Cyclops' walls cleaves clouds asunder.
And our babes at the gates in a long, long line
Cling to their mothers with wail and with weeping that
[cannot avail—
"O mother" they moan, "alone, alone; woe's me!" etc.

See also Hecuba's lament, *Tro.* 1272 ff.

In many places throughout Greek literature we hear

A cry of perishing lands,
A moan as of people in prison,
A tumult of infinite griefs;

Hecuba's is such a cry:

The deepest depth of all my miseries;
I leave my land; my city is aflame;
O Troy. . .
Soon of thy glorious name thou wilt be spoiled.
They fire thee, and they hale us forth the land,
Thralls.

and the chorus answers:

ἂ δὲ μεγαλόπολις
ἀπολις ὄλωλεν οὐδ' ἔτ' ἔστι Τροία.*

- Hec.* Ilios is blazing, the ramparts of Pergamos crashing
Down, with the homes of our city, mid flames far-flashing
Over their ruins, a furnace glow.
- Cho.* With its wide-winged blackness the heaven's face covering,
O'er our spear-stricken land is the smoke-cloud hovering.
In madness of ruin-rush earthward they reel
Our halls, neath the fire and the foeman's steel.
- Hec.* Hear children, O hearken your mother's crying.
- Cho.* To the dead dost thou wail,—can they hear thine entreating?
- Hec.* From my land unto mansions of slavery.
O hapless I!
O Priam, O Priam, slain without tomb,
Without friend, nought, nought dost thou know of thy
[doom!
- Cho.* For the blackness of death hath shrouded the eyes
Of the righteous, by the hand of the impious slain.
- Hec.* The death-flame, the spear in your midst have dominion—
- Cho.* Swift falling to earth your memorial shall vanish,—
- Hec.* And the dust o'er the welkin wide stretching its pinion,
Mine eyes from the home of my yearning shall banish.
- Cho.* And the name of my land shall be heard not, and wide
Shall her children be scattered; no more doth abide Troy's
[woeful pride.
- Hec.* Did ye mark, did ye hear?
- Cho.* Crashed Pergamus down.

Hec. The earthquake thereof shall engulf the town!

O sorrow's crown!

O tottering limbs upbear

My steps; to the life of bondage fare.

Cho. O hapless Troy! Yet down to the strand

And the galleys Achaean my feet must strain.

Hec. O land—of my children the nursing-land!

Cho. Woe, wail the refrain!

More direct and terrible are the words of Aeschylus:
Clytemnestra vaunts over the fallen city—

Today the Achaeans fill the streets of Troy.

Methinks a shout discordant strikes the ear.

Pour vinegar and oil in the selfsame vessel

And you will name them standing sundered foes.

So of the captives and the captors rise

Discordant voices of a twofold fate.

For they, the captives, fallen on many a corpse

Of men, their brethren, sons across their sires,

No longer from a throat whose speech is free

Bewail the ruin of their near and dear.

And the chorus boasts that Zeus

Down on the towers of Troytown has cast

A net so fine-wrought that no leap hath o'er past

Nor of aged nor young, the mighty slave snare

Of a doom that will bear

One and all to destruction within her.

And through strophe and antistrophe we see the might
of Peitho who leads men to follow in the footsteps of Love
to their utter undoing.

The herald speaks no less grimly:

Agamemnon Hath torn down Troy with Zeus' avenging

[mattock

And therewith ploughed up utterly the plain.

Her altars all unseen, gods' images,

The seed of all the soil now wastes away.

Agamemnon says:

By smoke the conquered city stands a sign;
The blasts of Até live; but with them dying
The ashes breathe rich breath of wealth abroad.
For this must we make memorable return
Unto the gods; since we our wrathful snares
Set close about the city. For a woman
The beast of Argos laid a city low;
A horse's foal, a folk that bears the shield,
Leaping its leap when Pleiades go down,
It crossed the walls, a lion carnal-mad,
And lapped its very fill with tyrant's blood.

Through the power of Love the very earth is shaken. By the aid of Aphrodite Typhoeus was born, a monster that threatened the very throne of Zeus. In the great battle that ensued "earth resounded terribly, and the wide heaven above, and the sea and Ocean's streams and the nether parts of the earth. Great Olympus reeled beneath the divine feet of the king as he arose and the earth groaned thereat. And through the two of them the heat took hold on the dark-blue sea, through the thunder and the lightning and through the fire from the monster, and the scorching winds and the blazing thunderbolt. The whole earth seethed, and the sky and sea: and the long waves raged along the beaches, round and about, at the rush of the deathless gods: and there arose an endless shaking."

From the maimed body of the monster arose a terrible vapor that scorched a great part of earth. And boisterous winds arose. Some rush upon the misty sea and work great havoc among men with their evil, raging blasts; and men who meet these upon the sea have no help against the mischief. Others again over the boundless flowering earth spoil the fair fields of men who dwell below, filling them with dust and cruel uproar. (Hes. Theog. 840 ff.)

Cp. Swinburne:

And under thee newly arisen
 Loud shoals and shipwrecking reefs,
 Fierce air and violent light;
 Sail rent and sundering oar,
 Darkness and noises of night;
 Clashing of streams in the sea,
 Wave against wave as a sword,
 Clamor of currents, and foam;
 Rains making ruin on earth,
 Winds that wax ravenous and roam
 As wolves in a wolfish horde;

And referring to Persephone he says

Fruits growing faint in the tree,
 And blind things dead in their birth;
 Famine and blighting of corn.

Demeter in her grief for her daughter, carried off by Pluto, "caused a most dreadful and cruel year for mankind over the all-nourishing earth; the ground would not make the seed sprout, for rich-crowned Demeter kept it hid. In the fields the oxen drew many a curved plough in vain, and much white barley was cast upon the ground without avail. So she would have destroyed the whole race of man with cruel famine" had Zeus not intervened.

The dividing of friend against friend,
 The severing of brother and brother;

This is the theme of the *Iliad*; the wrath of Achilles because of a maiden.

The last stanza is a résumé of the woes that Love has brought upon mortals; and of these woes the great of earth have had their share. Euripides, in the prologue of *Helen*, has shown how ruin befell Troy. Zeus, beguiled by

Aphrodite with love for Leda, sought refuge on her bosom in the guise of a swan pursued by an eagle. Thus the divine and fatal origin of Helen is explained. Furthermore Aphrodite fomented strife among the immortals by her trick in the affair of the judgment of Paris.

To a hollow vale on Ida came three goddesses to Paris, for beauty's prize contending, Hera and Cypris and the virgin child of Zeus, eager to secure his verdict on their loveliness. Now Cypris held out my beauty,—if aught so wretched deserves that name,—as a bride before the eyes of Paris, saying he should marry me; and so she won the day; wherefore the shepherd of Ida left his stading, and came to Sparta, thinking to win me for his bride.

and the will of Zeus straightway

Upon the land of Hellas and the hapless Phrygians brought war.

On this account Helen says

there by Scamander's stream hath many a life breathed out its last, and
[all for me.

She laments, saying

For mine anguish I raise an exceeding great bitter cry!
How shall I agonize forth my lament? to what muse draw nigh
With tears, with death-dirges, or with moanings of misery?
Woe's me, woe's me.
Come Sea-maids, hitherward winging,
Daughters of Earth's travail-throes,
Sirens, to me draw nigh,
That your flutes and your pipes may sigh
In accord with my wailings and cry
To my sorrows consonant ringing
With tears, lamentations and woes.
O would but Persephone lend
Fellow-mourners from Hades, to blend
Death-dirges with mine!

The chorus hears her "pitiful wailing";

Mournful and wild did it seem
As the shriek of a Naiad's despair

Far-borne on the mountain air,
 When she moans faint-fleeing the snare,
 When the might of Pan is prevailing,
 And the gorges where cataracts stream
 Ring to her scream.

Paris came for Helen and with him

in treacherous malice

Came Cypris, the bringer of Death's desolation
 Unto Danaus' sons, unto Priam's nation.
 Woe is me for my lot, who am misery's bride.

And later she laments:

Woe, hapless Troy, for thee, woe.

Thou hast perished for sins not thine own, under misery's load brought
[low!

And the gifts of Cypris to me for their fruit have borne
 Rivers of blood and of tears, and to them that mourn
 Anguish is added, and griefs to the grief-forlorn.
 There are mothers for dead sons weeping;
 There are maids that have cast shorn hair
 Where seaward Scamander on-sweeping
 The limbs of their brothers bare. And from Hellas a cry, a cry
 Ringeth heavenward wild and high
 And with frenzied hands on her head
 She smiteth; her fingers are red
 From the cheeks that the blood-furrows dye.

Then follows here, as in the Chorus of Hippoly'
 specific example from mythology, of the cruelty of Love,
 similar to the one with which Swinburne closes his chorus.

Ah maiden of Arcady, happy, Callisto, art thou,
 O fourfoot-pacing thing who wast Zeus' bride,
 Better by far than my mother's is thy lot now,
 Who hast cast the burden of human sorrow aside,
 And only now for the shaggy limb
 Of the brute with tears are thy fierce eyes dim.
 Yea, happier she whom Artemis drave from her choir,

A stag, gold-antlered Merops' Titanian daughter,
Because of her beauty; but mine with the brands of desire
Hath enkindled Dardanian Pergamus' ruin-pyre
And hath given the Achaeans to slaughter.

Aeschylus' characterization of Helen is quite brief, but remarkably comprehensive: *ἐλένας, ἐλανδρος, ἐλέπτολις*, not because of her own sins, but through the will of the stern implacable Aphrodite. Instance of her might fallen on the cities of men are many. See Sophocles, Tr. 431, where Heracles destroys Oechalia, because he loved Iole, the daughter of king Eurytus:

ὥς ταύτης πόθῳ
πόλις δαμείη πᾶσα, κοῦξ ἡ Λυδία
πέρσειεν αὐτήν, ἀλλ' ὁ τῆς ἔρωσ φανεί.

Likewise Euripides, *Hipp.*, 525 ff.

Ἔρωτα δέ, τὸν τύραννον ἀνδρῶν
. . . οὐ σεβίζομεν,
πέρθοντα καὶ διὰ πάσας
ἰόντα συμφορὰς
θνατοῖς, ὅταν ἔλθῃ.

The ruthless power of love is the central thought in all this. See Jebb, *Soph. Antig.* notes 782-3.

In the Agamemnon we have an example of Eros acting on the individuals he inspired. The capture of Troy is the stroke of Zeus, but under that stroke falls also the conqueror of Troy, as an atonement for being led too far. Love, the lust for slaughter and ruin, fell upon the victorious host in its victory, and led it to desecrate what was forbidden.

Cornford says of it, p. 157: "The conquerors of Troy are beset by Eros, the spirit of rapine; but this passion is not conceived as a natural state of mind determined by a

previous state—the effect of a normal cause; it is a spirit (daimon) which haunts, swoops down, and takes possession of the soul, when reason slumbers and keeps no watch.” Now it is in this respect that Swinburne is not Aeschylean; the malignity of his divinities is not the result of the mistakes of men, but of their ill-will towards men.

THIRD EPISODE

Atalanta enters and greets the sun and Artemis and speaks at length of her devotion to her goddess. The speech is, in effect, a repetition of the prologue. Meleager then addresses Atalanta about as Hippolytus addresses Artemis. He looks upon her as something divine. He is taunted by his mother's brothers and angry words are exchanged, but the scene is interrupted by the queen who warns them that words may turn snakes. Atalanta then makes her long rhesis in which she sets forth her case. At the end she warns them with a sort of divine indignation to refrain transgressing hands and lips lest they die. Oeneus pronounces his blessing on the hunt and the procession starts. Here follows the chorus of *The Word is Death*.

THIRD STASIMON

Atalanta, at the close of her speech, just before the huntsmen start on their way, gives stern and ominous warning to those who by their sharp and sarcastic utterances have opposed her participation in the hunt, first appealing to the supreme judge to judge between them.

for now,
If there be any highest in heaven, a god
Above all thrones and thunders of the gods
Throned, and the wheels of the world roll under him,

Judge he between me and all of you, and see
 If I transgress at all; but ye, refrain
 Transgressing hands and reinless mouths, and keep
 Silence, lest by much foam of violent words
 And proper poison of your lips ye die.

This motivates not only the chorus following but all the rest of the play. For all too soon do reinless words set free transgressing hands. The double figure used by Swinburne has two aspects; one looking to the hunt with its din and clamor and deeds of prowess; the other psychological, showing the sinister working of fate within the mind of more than one treading the wretched stage, and man's utter unconsciousness of the lurking powers of darkness that wait to hurl him to ruin. The chorus, taking up the theme of the Infatuate Word proceeds to lash itself into a very ecstasy of fury that leads straight to the shambles of Até. Of this chorus, Woodberry says: (Swinburne, p. 62) "the thought is arrived at through the spectacle of the suffering of the human race, and applies, as it were, to the Zeus of Prometheus." But the attitude of Prometheus the god toward his brother god is mild when compared with the attitude of man, the mud-moulded ephemeral, towards his sardonic creator, whom he pleases to characterize as *the supreme evil*. Swinburne is probably playing on the meaning of the word supreme, as he often does, having in mind the warning of Oceanus to Prometheus, particularly the lines

εἰ δ' ὦδε τραχεῖς καὶ τεθηγμένους λόγους
 ρίψεις, τάχ' ἂν σου καὶ μακρὰν ἀνωτέρω
 θακῶν κλύοι Ζεὺς, ὥστε σοι τὸν νῦν ὄχλον
 παρόντα μόχθων παιδιὰν εἶναι δοκεῖν.

Prometheus calls nature to witness his sufferings; man taunts god himself as the author and the malignant

dispenser of the ills that fall to mortal lot. Prometheus sees the end of his sufferings, though it is far away; man knows that

A little fruit a little while is ours,
And the worm finds it soon.

But for him there is death and much forgetfulness of things, a boon for which Prometheus cannot hope. He does know, however, that time will bring reconciliation and release from pain. Man takes pleasure in throwing into god's face his sardonic delight in afflicting his children. Prometheus is fellow god and benefactor of Zeus, with perfect foreknowledge of the future; man is the thing fashioned with loathing and love and clothed with derision, whose life is a watch between a sleep and a sleep. He has done nothing for god nor is there anything for him to do. Prometheus is in disfavor with Zeus because of his attempt to relieve man of some of his affliction, which he knows has arisen from the injustice of Zeus. He has made life more tolerable for him in many ways, particularly by hiding from him foreknowledge of his doom, whereas Zeus had put into his eyes foreknowledge of death. Prometheus is not the only example of the cruelty of Zeus; there is Atlas, Typhon, the giants in Tartarus, besides individuals of the earth-born brood chosen for particular afflictions, of whom Io is a good example. Prometheus is too free of speech; the chorus tells him so, as do Oceanus his friend and Hermes his enemy. For man the word is death. The closing admonition of the Swinburnian chorus is to keep lips from over-speech, echoing in this the warning of Atalanta. But unfortunately for our hero the vain word has been spoken already.

This chorus is Aeschylean in its thunderous flow and in its accepting without question the existence of the gods that overwhelm us with affliction. It is un-Aeschylean in that it gives no motive nor justification for such treatment; in that, it is Euripidean, for Euripides often takes a hostile attitude towards the gods because of their treatment of mortals. They are the authors of all our woes.

Thou hast laid
Upon us with thy left hand life and said
Live: and again thou hast said, Yield up your breath,
And with thy right hand laid upon us death,

is an echo of Euripides' *Medea*, 1109 ff.

But one crowning woe for every mortal man I now will name; suppose that they have found sufficient means to live, and see their children grow to man's estate and walk in virtue's path, still, if fortune so befall, comes death and bears the children's bodies off to hades. Can it be any profit to the gods to heap upon us mortal men beside our other woes this further grief?

Helen, when reproached by Menelaus for her flight with Paris, cries (*Troad.* 1042 f.)

I implore thee impute not to me that heaven-sent affliction.

Apollo lives up to his name that is a destroying.

O fair shining Helios, how hast thou destroyed him and me also. Rightly among mortals art thou called Apollo. fr. 781.

So in fr. 273,

For all men and not for us alone, the god at one time or another has ruined life. No one bears good fortune to the end.

For the same idea in various guises see *Hecuba*, 197; 721; *Phoen.* 1030; *Iph. Aul.* 411; upon the high and low

alike fall their ill-will; sometimes the low fare better than the high. Cf. Helen, 1213,

The base are often more fortunate than the noble.

and Orestes, 954,

So you must leave the light; your noble birth has availed you nought, nor the Pythian Phoebus, seated on his tripod, but rather has he destroyed you.

They bring us into hopeless situations to observe how we would extricate ourselves. Agamemnon in the hopelessness and perplexity of misfortune that demands the sacrifice of his daughter, cries,

How by the gods I am whelmed amid despair. (Iph. Aul. 536.)

In the same play, 24, we see that for the slightest pretext they ruin our life.

For the god's will clashed with man's will now,
Wrecking his life.

Justice does not exist, or else she is blind.

*οὐχ ὁρᾷ Δίκη κακοῦς,
οὐδ' ἀμείβεται βροτῶν ἀσυνεσίας.*

Swinburne begins his chorus with a very striking characterization of "Τῆρις made manifest in the word. It leads a man to ruin.

Who hath given man speech? or who hath set therein
A thorn for peril and a snare for sin?
For in the word his life is and his breath,
And in the word his death,
That madness and the infatuate heart may breed
From the womb's word the deed
And life bring one thing forth ere all pass by,
Even one thing which is ours yet cannot die—
Death.

This is an Aeschylean idea, but Swinburne has made of it a too universal application. Aeschylus applies it to those who because of their sins have brought upon themselves the just resentment of god. But Swinburne in his sweeping generalization applies it to wise men and to fools,—to the whole human race. The high gods in their hate have overwhelmed us all, and through no fault of our own, but for their good pleasure.

Having promised us death, he reverts to the sorrows and tears that are ours, for our woes and mishaps and old age, treating the last in true Euripidean manner. In fact the whole outlook upon life is Euripidean. We all carry our burdens, beneath which each one is crushed. (*Alcestis*, 893 f.)

συμφορὰ δ' ἑτέρους ἑτέρα
πιέζει φανείσα θνατῶν.

For us our doom is fixed; it is ours to bear. (*Alcestis*, 20)

τῇδε γάρ σφ' ἐν ἡμέρᾳ
θανεῖν πέπρωται καὶ μεταστήναι βίον.

The chorus closes the Hecuba with this hopeless advice:

ἴτε πρὸς λιμένας σκηνὰς τε, φίλαι,
τῶν δεσποσύνων πειρασόμεναι
μόχθων' στερρὰ γὰρ ἀνάγκη.

From god comes what comes, *Fr.* 62

τὸ θεῖον ὥς ἀελλπτον ἔρχεται
θυητοῖσιν, ἔλκει δ' ὄνυτο' ἐκ ταύτου τύχας.

No one is wholly blest. *Fr.* 150

οὐκ ἔστιν ὅστις εὐτυχῆς ἔφυ βροτῶν,
ὃν μὴ τὸ θεῖον ὥς τὰ πολλὰ συνθέλει.

From evil there is no escape, *Fr.* 444

ὦ δαῖμον, ὥς οὐκ ἔστ' ἀποστροφή βροτοῖς
τῶν ἐμφύτων τε καὶ θεηλάτων κακῶν.

Mishaps are many and they find us all. (Hipp. 981)

οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως εἴποιμ' ἂν εὐτυχεῖν τίνα θνητῶν

for

πολλαὶ γε πολλοῖς εἰσι συμφοραὶ βροτῶν
μορφαὶ δὲ διαφέρουσιν' ἐν δ' ἂν εὐτυχῆς
μόλις ποτ' ἐξέβροι τις ἀνθρώπων βίῳ. (Ion, 381 ff)

The lot of all is unstable; the fool alone feels secure.
(Troad. 1203 ff)

θνητῶν δὲ μῶρος ὅστις εὖ πράσσειν δοκῶν
βέβαια χαίρει' τοῖς τρόποις γὰρ αἱ τυχαί,
ἐμπληκτος ὡς ἄνθρωπος, ἄλλοτ' ἄλλοσε
πηδῶσι, κούδεις αὐτὸς εὐτυχεῖ ποτε.

There is, however, this difference between the attitudes of the two men; Swinburne's eyes are fixed on death, while Euripides prefers to contemplate the many misfortunes that anticipate death. The following passages show the habit of the latter:

πάλαί σκοποῦμαι τὰς τύχας τῶν βροτῶν
ὡς εὖ μεταλλάσσουσιν' ὅς γὰρ ἂν σφαλῇ
εἰς ὀρθὸν ἔστη χῶ πρὶν εὐτυχῶν πίτνει. Fr. 262

and

φεῦ, τὰ τῶν εὐδαιμονούντων ὡς τάχιστα στρέφει θεός. Fr. 540

and

πολλὰς γ' ὁ δαίμων τοῦ βίου μεταστάσει
ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν μεταβολὰς τε τῆς τύχης. Fr. 554

and

βέβαια δ' οὐδεὶς εὐτυχεῖ θνητὸς γεγώς. Fr. 1074

Swinburne's attitude to old age is Euripidean, rather than Aeschylean, although he probably caught his theme from the Agamemnon, where old age when the leaf has been shed goes his three-footed ways, nothing

better than a dream that roams in the daytime. There is the same Euripidean amplification and the same lament.

Yea, and with weariness of lips and eyes,
With breaking of the bosom and with sighs,
We labor, and are clad and fed with grief
And filled with days we would not fain behold
And nights we would not hear of; we wax old,
All we wax old and wither like a leaf.
We are outcast, strayed between bright sun and moon;
Our light and darkness are as leaves of flowers,
Black flowers and white, that perish; and the noon
As midnight, and the night as daylight hours.

The chorus of the Heracles gives the characteristic Euripidean attitude towards this condition of life. "Ce sont de gens que l'âge accable, et qui loin de cacher leur faiblesse, semblent prendre plaisir à la détailler. Ils s'en vont, appuyés sur un bâton, les genoux branlants; ils chantent une triste complainte; la blancheur de leurs cheveux est aussi éclatante que celles de cygnes. Ils ne sont plus qu'une voix, qu'un souffle, qu'une vision de songe nocturne. Et ce sont eux-mêmes, comme toujours, qui la constatent, sans y être contraints." (P. Masqueray, Euripide et ses Idées, p. 272.)

ὑπὸ ῥωφα μέλαθρα καὶ
γέραια δέμνι' ἀμφὶ βάκτροις
ἔρεισμα θέμενος, ἐστάλην
ιηλέμων γόων ἄοι—
ὁδὸς ὥστε πολιοῦς θρνις,
ἔπεα μόνον καὶ δόκη—
μα νυκτερωπὸν ἐννύχων ὀνειῶρων,
τρομερὰ μὲν, ἀλλ' ὁμῶς πρόθυμ'.

The question as to what we shall do with the tears shed on our journey to this bourne both Swinburne and

Euripides leave unanswered, although the former does make some interesting suggestions.

What shall be done with all these tears of ours?
 Shall they make watersprings in the fair heaven
 To bathe the brows of morning? or like flowers
 Be shed and shine before the starriest hours,
 Or make the raiment of the weeping seven?
 Or rather, O our masters, shall they be
 Food for the famine of the grievous sea,
 A great well-head of lamentation
 Satiating the sad gods? or fall and flow
 Among the years and seasons to and fro,
 And wash their feet with tribulation
 And fill them full with grieving ere they go?

Throughout Euripides they trickle just as freely and at times with quite as much ostentation.

δάκρυνά τ' δακρύων καταλείβεται
 ἀμετέροισι δόμοις'

Swinburne's high gods mix our drink with the bubbling bitterness of life and death and hold it to our lips and laugh; but they taste not, lest they too change and sleep. They mix it, however, for the whole human race; and not for the man who has sinned, as in Aeschylus, nor for the man marked for destruction, as in Sophocles. There we see that 'though one look well, he will not find the mortal who, if the god should draw him on to evil, could escape.' Swinburne takes the Euripidean outlook; god confounds everything.

But up in heaven the high gods one by one
 Lay hands upon the draught that quickeneth,
 Fulfilled with all tears shed and all things done,
 And stir with soft imperishable breath
 The bubbling bitterness of life and death,

And hold it to our lips and laugh; but they
Preserve their lips from tasting night or day,
Lest they too change and sleep, the fates that spun,
The lips made us and the hands that slay;
Lest all these change and heaven bow down to none,
Change and be subject to the secular sway
And terrene revolution of the sun.

*Therefore they thrust it from them, putting time away.

For a similar notion of the immortality of the gods see *Iliad* 5, 341 f: where in explanation of the statement that ichor flowed from the wounded wrist of Aphrodite, the poet says:

οὐ γὰρ σίτον ἔδουσ', οὐ πίνουσ' αἶθοπα οἶνον,
τοῦνεκ' ἀναίμονες εἰσι καὶ ἀθάνατοι καλέονται.

* In regard to the immortality of the gods, Sappho has said: "To die was an evil, the gods having so decided, since had it not been so they themselves would have died."

Euripides cites an instance and adds his comment. Polymestor speaks to Queen Hecuba, *Hec.* 952 ff.

O Hecuba, I weep beholding thee,
Thy city, and thine offspring slain so late.
Naught is there man may trust, nor high repute,
Nor present weal—for it may turn to woe;
All things the gods confound, hurl this way and that,
Turmoiling all, that we, foreknowing naught,
May worship them:—what skills it to make moan
For this, outrunning evils none the more?

In the *Orestes* the chorus cries "Alas for the deeds of the malice of heaven," to which Electra replies:

Wrongful was he who uttered that wrongful rede
When Loxias, throned on the tripod of Themis, decreed
The death of my mother, a foul unnatural deed.

In the Ion, Creusa's thoughts of Apollo are none too kind.

But, looking on Apollo's dwelling place,
I traversed o'er an ancient memory's track:
Afar my thoughts were, and my body here.
Ah, wrongs of women wrongful-reckless deeds
Of gods! For justice where shall we make suit,
If 'tis our Lords' injustice crushes us?

The wish to reduce the gods to the state of man's wretchedness for an hour has a ring of Homeric naiveté. We get a hint, however, in Hippolytus, 1415, where in reply to his father's admission that the gods had caused his wit to stumble, Hippolytus cries:

O that men's curses could but strike the gods!

Swinburne has treated the subject in a very comprehensive manner.

I would the wine of time, made sharp and sweet
With multitudinous days and nights and tears
And many mixing savors of strange years,
Were no more trodden of them under feet,
Cast out and spilt about their holy places;
That life were given them as a fruit to eat
And death to drink as water;

The remainder of the chorus is made up of a very elaborate statement of the theory of compensation in divine providence, the theory that the gods never give to mortals unmixed blessings. This idea is as old as Homer. Cf. Il. 24, 525

"Ὡς γὰρ ἐπεκλώσαντο θεοὶ δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν,
ζῶειν ἀχρυνμένοις' αὐτοὶ δέ τ' ἀκηδέες εἶσιν.

"For two urns stand upon the floor of Zeus filled with his evil gifts, and one with blessings. To whomsoever

Zeus whose joy is the lightning dealeth a mingled lot,
that man chanceth now upon ill and now again upon good,
but to whom he giveth but of the bad kind him he bringeth
to scorn, and evil famine chaseth him over the goodly
earth, and he is a wanderer honored of neither gods nor
men."

The arraignment of the supreme evil is very strong;
it might have been inspired, as Swinburne himself said of
Shakespeare's *Timon*, by the triune furies of Ezekiel,
Juvenal, and Dante.

The ode sinks to repose in true Greek manner, closing
with the following classical injunction:

But ye, keep ye on earth
Your lips from over-speech.
Loud words and longing are so little worth;
And the end is hard to reach.
For silence after grievous things is good,
And reverence and the fear that makes men whole,
And shame and righteous governance of blood,
And lordship of the soul.
But from sharp words and wits men pluck no fruit,
And gathering thorns they shake the tree at root;
For words divide and rend;
But silence is most noble to the end.

The idea is a Greek commonplace. Cf. Prometheus,
311 ff. Oceanus urges Prometheus to

Know thyself; come, fashion anew thy ways;
New is the tyrant now who rules the gods.
But if thou wilt thus vent rough, whetted words,
Speedily, though he sits so very high,
Zeus, hearing thee, will make thy present horde
Of troubles seem the merest play of children.

and 320

Yet such, Prometheus, comes to be the wage
Of him whose tongue upvaunteth overhigh.

and 329 ff.

But thou be silent, not in speech perverse;
For knowest thou not, who art exceeding wise,
The penalty that plagues an idle tongue?

See also Sophocles, *Antigone*, 127

Zeus utterly abhors the boasts of a proud tongue;

and 1347 ff.

Wisdom is the supreme part of happiness; and reverence towards the gods must be inviolate. Great words of prideful men are ever punished with great blows, and, in old age, teach the chastened to be wise.

The whole matter is stated briefly but convincingly in Prov. 18, 7

A fool's mouth is his destruction
And his lips are the snare of his soul

and 21,

Death and life are in the power of the tongue:
And they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.

FOURTH EPISODE

The fourth episode is particularly Homeric in spirit and suggestiveness, to which is added a certain coloring suggested by the herald in the *Electra* of Sophocles. In her first speech Althaea airs her Aeschylus by calling attention to the warder gods that face the sun. Agam. 519. There is a Homeric ring in the

clashes of swift hoofs and trampling feet
And through the windy pillared corridor—cf. Il. 24, 323

At the word of good news Althaea orders sacrifice in imitation of her great prototype, Clytemnestra. Cf. Ag. 86 ff. The herald recalls Homer at once by giving us

the roster of the hunt. Some of the huntsmen are found in the great Catalogue, while others appear on the roster of the good ship *Argo*. We see *Laertes*, island born, the young *Gerenian Nestor*, the beautiful *Atalanta* from whose

white braced shoulder the plumed shafts
Rang, and the bow shone from her side.

who is a *Virgilian Artemis* rather than *Homeric*. Cf. *Aen.* 6, 498; *Od.* 6, 102; *Apoll. Arg.* 3, 875. *Meleager* is like the sun in spring, and the twin sons of *Leda*, whom *Althaea* had likened to one sundered star, the *Horatian lucida sidera*. And there were *Toxeus* and *Plexippus* and the keenest eye of *Lynceus*, even as he was called in the *Argonautica*. The details of the hunt follow very closely the account of *Ovid*.

FOURTH STASIMON

REST AFTER TOIL

This chorus is motivated by the close of the herald's speech in which he describes the place where the hunters were resting after their struggle with the boar. When the work was all over they

Sat and drew breath and drank and made great cheer,
And washed the hard sweat off their calmer brows.
For much sweet grass grew higher than grew the reed,
And good for slumber, and every holier herb,
Narcissus, and the low-lying *melilote*,
And all of goodliest blade and bloom that springs
Where, hid by heavier hyacinth, violet buds
Blossom and burn; and fire of yellower flowers
And light of crescent lilies, and such leaves
As fear the *Faun's* and know the *Dryad's* feet;
Olive and ivy and poplar dedicate,
And many a well-spring overwatched of these.
There now they rest;

Based on such a theme, it offers one of the few examples found in Swinburne of the peaceful mood, when the noon-day quiet holds the hill. The singer seems to lie back in the shadows, lulled by every peaceful note of the woodlands and breathed upon by every fragrant wind that haunts the vale. There are few things like it in the language, and among those few it must be given first place. The spirit and form suggest at the very outset the great chorus in the *Oedipus Coloneus* of Sophocles, although in substance it owes very little to that passage. It is the low pitched mood that suggests Sophocles' *Colonus*, while the content is more Euripidean.

O that I now, I too were
By deep wells and waterfloods,
Streams of ancient hills, and where
All the wan green places bear
Blossoms cleaving to the sod, etc.

are very close to the fancy of *Phaedra* who in her love fever longs for the woods and streams. *Hippol.* 208 ff.

(Oh but to quaff, where the spray-veil drifteth
O'er taintless fountains, the dear cool stream!
Oh to lie in the mead where the soft wind lifteth
Its tresses—'neath poplars to lie and dream.
Let me hence to the mountain afar—I will hie me
To the forest, the pines—)

Here Swinburne seemed unable to go on with the description without introducing the presence of a god, just as the Greeks have done in many of their best descriptions. The divinity seems to have been needed to lend grace to the painting, or to give it a purpose. So when the poet thinks of ivy it is quite natural to say

darkest ivy buds
As divide thy yellow hair,

Bacchus, and their leaves that nod
Round thy fawn-skin brush that bare
Snow-soft shoulders of a god.

So in the Bacchae, 81 f.

κισσῶ τε στεφανωθείς
Διόνυον θεραπεύει

And 111 f.

στικτῶν τ' ἐνδυτὰ νεβρίδων
στέφετε λευκοτρίχων πλοκάμων
μαλλοῖς'

Snow-soft seems like a new epithet for the shoulders of the god, although we find snowy flesh of Adonis stained by blood. Bion, 1, 10 "Pale as grass" gives a Sapphic touch, while the vine and the nightingales are common-places in Greek as well as English. Sophocles' description of Colonus is made up of such, in spite of the fact that it is so perfect, poetically.

(Stranger, in this land of goodly steeds thou hast come to earth's fairest home, even to our white Colonus; where the nightingale, a constant guest, trills her clear note in the covert of green glades, dwelling amid the wine-dark ivy and the god's inviolate bowers, rich in berries and fruit, unvisited by sun, unvexed by wind of any storm; where the reveller Dionysus ever walks the ground, companion of the nymphs that nursed him.)

There is in Swinburne the same calm.

Pale as grass or latter flowers
Or the wild vine's wan wet rings
Full of dew beneath the moon,
And all day the nightingale
Sleeps, and all night sings;
There in cold remote recesses
That nor alien eyes assail,
Feet, nor imminence of wings,
Nor a wind nor any tune,
Thou, O queen and holiest,
Flower the whitest of all things, etc.

In Euripides we find the same touch. Hippolytus, offering an anadem to Artemis (Hipp. 73 ff.) says:

For thee this woven garland from a mead
 Unsullied have I twined, O queen, and bring.
 There never shepherd dares to feed his flock,
 Nor steel of sickle came; only the bee
 Roveth the springtide mead undesecrate;
 And reverence wathereth it with river-dews.
 They which have heritage of self-control
 In all things, purity inborn, untaught,
 These there may gather flowers, but none impure.

Swinburne, addressing the same goddess, surrounds her with the same scenery.

Or in lower pools that see
 All their margs clothed all round
 With the innumerable lily
 Whence the golden-girdled bee
 Flits through flowering rush to fret
 White or duskier violet

(Here the poet introduces a reminiscence from Pindar, O. 6, 84 ff.)

Fair as those that in far years
 With their buds left luminous
 And their little leaves made wet
 From the warmer dew of tears,
 Mother's tears in extreme need,
 Hid the limbs of Iamus
 Of thy brother's seed;
 For his heart was piteous
 Toward him even as thine heart now
 Pitiful toward us.

In Pindar the new-born Iamus "was hidden among rushes in an impenetrable brake, his tender body all suffused with golden and deep purple gleams of violet flowers."

Swinburne owes considerable to Euripides in this chorus. And in addition to the actual reminiscences, which are many, he has caught the gleam and radiancy of the Greek rationalist at his very best. The cold dark recesses of the woods, the passionless white goddess, before whom is set the picture of a little child in the hope of evoking some tenderness and compassion—in this we see a picture that is both Swinburnian and Euripidean in its pathos.

Aeschylus. Agamemnon, 140 ff. has a similar invocation to Artemis.

Though so kind, O lady fair,
To the tender dew drops of a lion's lair,
And to the sucklings of all beasts we find
Roaming the fields thou art of gentle mind,
Consent the signs of these things to fulfill,
Visions of good and visions too of ill.

Swinburne's "Be thou favorable and fair" is the note that was struck in the prologue. As often with him, the close is bathos.

But do thou, sweet, otherwise,
Having heed of all our prayer,
Taking note of all our sighs;
We beseech thee by thy light,
By thy bow and thy sweet eyes,
And the kingdom of the night,
Be thou favorable and fair;
By thine arrows and thy might,
And Orion overthrown;
By the maiden thy delight,
By the indissoluble Zone
And the sacred hair.

FIFTH EPISODE

The messenger reports the death of Toxeus and Plexippus. Then follows Althaea's great conflict of soul between love of brothers and love of son. We have an Euripidean development of the celebrated theme in the *Antigone* of Sophocles. At the conclusion of her mental struggle the three fates visit her once more; there is now no possibility of escape for Meleager. The house is broken, is broken, it shall not stand, sing the chorus, and Althaea adds that a rod smote it of old and now the ax is here.

Swinburne has treated the mental struggle of the queen in quite Ovidian manner.

FIFTH STASIMON

THE BITTER JEALOUSY OF GOD

The fifth stasimon is motivated by the entrance of the Fates, returned to witness the burning of the brand that Althaea had been presumptuous years ago to extinguish. She now meets them as she goes out to avenge herself on her son for the slaughter of her brothers.

Fire in the roofs, and on the lintel, fire.
 Lo ye, who stand and weave between the doors,
 There; and blood drips from hand and thread and stains
 Threshold and raiment and me passing in
 Flecked with the sudden sanguine drops of death.

Swinburne draws a sharp antithesis between the birth of Love in the second stasimon and that second birth, when

Fate, mother of desires and fears,
 Bore unto men the law of tears;

she is great,

The daughter of doom, the mother of death,
The sister of sorrow; a lifelong weight
That no man's finger lighteneth;
Nor any god can lighten fate:
A landmark seen across the way
Where one race treads where the other trod;
An evil scepter, an evil stay
Wrought for a staff, wrought for a rod,
The bitter jealousy of God.

See Hes. Theog. 210 ff.

And Night bare hateful Doom and black Fate and Death, and she
bare Sleep and the tribe of Dreams.

For the power of Fate see Eurip. Heracleidae, 615 f.

To shun what Fate decrees is nowise permitted; none by cunning
shall thrust it from him; but he, who vainly would do so, shall have
unceasing trouble.

In Aeschylus Até is at times active in leading one into
the toils. Cf. Per. 97 f.

(For Delusion, at first all smiles and flattery, coaxes men into her
stake-nets; but out of them it is not possible for a man to surmount the
enclosure and escape unhurt.)

(The glebe of Até grows the grain of death.)

The "law of tears" is a figure similar to Aesch. Choe.
150

ὅμᾱς δὲ κωκυτοῖς ἐπανθίξειν νόμος

Such is the law of Zeus, ordaining that man must walk the
path that leads to wisdom in sorrow. Ag. 176 ff.

(Zeus who leads man wisdom-ward
Makes the path of wisdom hard;
Save through sorrow, all's debarred.
Trickles drop by drop in sleep before the heart
Care that keeps clear in mind sorrow's part.

Wisdom comes in their despite,
 Favor forced of gods who sit in splendor
 High enthronèd in their might.)

The idea of the immutability of fate, that neither god nor man can change it, is common in Greek and as old as Homer. Cf. Il. 6, 488 f.

μοῖραν δ' ἑνὴν φημι πεφυγμένον ἔμμεναι ἀνδρῶν,
 οὐ κακόν, οὐδὲ μὲν ἐσθλόν, ἐπὶ τὰ πρῶτα γένηται.

The same idea is found in Sophocles, *Antigone*, 951 ff.

(But dreadful is the mysterious power of fate; there is no deliverance from it by wealth or by war, by fenced city, or dark, sea-beaten ships.)

The ideas implied in *κῆρ* and *Ἐρινυες* are rather closely related. They are avenging spirits who cause a reversal of fortune. cf. *Aes. Sept.* 1055

ὦ μεγάλαυχοι καὶ φθερσιγενεῖς κῆρες Ἐρινύες

Agamemnon was aware of what his fate would be if he disobeyed the god. *Ag.* 206

βαρεῖα μὲν κῆρ τὸ μὴ πιθέσθαι

The *Erinyes* make the life of the unjust man wretched. *Ag.* 468

(At him who over man has trod
 Glower the stern fixed eyes of god.
 The dark *Erinyes* in time
 By sad reversal of life's lot
 Strike him from sight and he is not.
 Among the unseen low he's laid
 With not a hope for one to aid.
 And too much glory is not wise;
 Zeus' bolt is flung against his eyes.)

In Aeschylus the notion of divine jealousy (*φθόνος*) is quite prominent, but is always directed against the man

who oversteps the limits assigned to him by the gods. Its purpose is to punish sin. Swinburne's "bitter jealousy of god" is much more general and all-embracing than Aeschylus would attribute to any of the higher powers.

After Swinburne has presented the idea of divine jealousy he reverts to the Eros theme, which in Greek is often associated with the idea of *φθόρος*. His exposition of the 'reversal of fortune' idea is quite Greek, but expressed in more powerful language than the Greeks were in the habit of using.

Wilt thou cover thine hair with gold and with silver thy feet?
Hast thou taken the purple to fold thee and made thy mouth sweet?
Behold, when thy face is made bare, he that loved thee shall hate,
Thy face shall be no more fair at the fall of thy fate.
For thy life shall fall as the leaf and be shed as the rain;
And the veil of thine head shall be grief and the crown shall be pain.

EXODOS

Perhaps the most terrible passage in the play is Althaea's speech following the fifth stasimon. It closes, to be sure, with the conventional Greek appeal to Earth, but it makes an impression far from conventional. The language is Biblical in its simplicity and intensity, and nowhere is the feeling of pity colored with terror more definitely aroused. In the last sentence we get the motif of the stasimon:

Lo, the fire I lit
I burn with fire to quench it; yea, with flame
I burn up even the dust and ash thereof.

Then in a brief stichomythia she mystifies the chorus who can see nought but

A long brand that blackens; and white dust.

It is with some impatience that she cries:

This is my son, my flesh, my fruit of life,
Meleager, a fire enkindled of mine hands,
And of mine hands extinguished; this is he.

So spoke Clytemnestra after the slaughter of her husband:
1404 ff.

οὗτός ἐστι' Ἀγαμέμνων, ἐμὸς
πόσός, νεκρὸς δὲ, τῇσδε δεξιᾷς χερὸς
ἔργον, δικαίως τέκτονος' τὰδ' ὧδ' ἔχει.

Her last speech, which follows closely, is quite Euripidean in sentiment. Both Swinburne and Euripides have given children a place of some prominence in their writings. Althaea makes use of it in her first rhesis in the first episode. Then Meleager was not a "fire enkindled of mine hands," but "a goodly flower in fields of fight; at his birth he

Felt the light touch him coming forth, and wailed
Childlike; . . . thee most piteous, thee a tenderer thing
Than any flower of fleshly seed alive.

She then compares him to the great warrior (Aes. Sept.
380-395)

Yet was he then but a span long, and moaned
With inarticulate mouth inseparate words,
And with blind lips and fingers wrung my breast
Hard, and thrust out with foolish hands and feet,
Murmuring;

He had even the temerity to reach out after the fates.

but those gray women with bound hair
Who fright the gods frightened not him; he laughed
Seeing them, and pushed out hands to feel and haul
Distaff and thread intangible;

In the second episode Althaea returns to the subject more than once. A woman's honor is "Love, and the cry of children." She sees Meleager always as

the flower of three suns old,
The small one thing that lying drew down my life
To lie with thee and feed thee; a child and weak,
Mine, a delight to no man, sweet to me.

But fair for me thou wert, O little life,
Fruitless, the fruit of mine own flesh, and blind,
More than much gold, ungrown, a foolish flower.
For silver nor bright snow nor feather of foam
Was whiter, and no gold yellower than thine hair,
O child, my child;

She remembers how her brothers played with her when she was a little child.

For this man dead walked with me, child by child,
And made a weak staff for my feebler feet
With his own tender wrist and hand, and held
And led me softly, and showed me gold and steel
And shining shapes of mirror and bright crown
And all things fair; and threw light spears, and brought
Young hounds to huddle to my feet and thrust
Tame heads against my little maiden breasts,
And please me with great eyes;

In her lament for her brothers she reverts again to the subject:

the love of my born son,
A new-made mother's new-born love, that grows
From the soft child to the strong man, now soft,
Now strong as either, and still one sole same love,
Strives with me, no light thing to strive withal;

And the last, her death-song:

O child,
 Son, first-born, fairest—O sweet mouth, sweet eyes,
 That drew my life out through my suckling breast,
 That shone and clove my heart through,—O soft knees
 Clinging, O tender treadings of soft feet,
 Cheeks warm with little kissings,—O child, child,
 What have we made each other? Lo, I felt
 Thy weight cleave to me, a burden of beauty, O son,
 Thy cradled brows and loveliest loving lips,
 The floral hair, the little lightening eyes,
 And all thy goodly glory: with mine hands
 Delicately I fed thee, with my tongue
 Tenderly speke, saying, Verily in God's time
 For all the little likeness of thy limbs,
 Son, I shall make thee a kingly man to fight,
 A lordly leader; and hear before I die,
 'She bore the goodliest sword of all the world.'

Meleager, too, has a tender feeling for children; he recalls his young cousins, Helen and Clytemnestra, whom he saw on a visit to Sparta:

One swan-white,
 The little Helen, and less fair than she,
 Fair Clytaemnestra, grave as pasturing fawns
 Who feed and fear some arrow; but at whiles,
 As one smitten with love or wrung with joy,
 She laughs and lightens with her eyes, and then
 Weeps; whereat Helen, having laughed, weeps too,
 And the other chides her, and she, being chid speaks naught,
 But cheeks and lips and eyelids kisses her,
 Laughing; so fare they, as in their bloomless bud
 And full of unblown life, the blood of gods.

Even the young chorus has an idea on the subject: for when Althaea raves over the death of her brothers, the

chorus reminds her that the child is nearer than the brothers:

Nay, for the son lies close about thine heart,
Full of thy milk, warm from thy womb, and drains
Life and the blood of life and all thy fruit,
Eats thee and drinks thee as one who breaks bread and eats,
Treads wine and drinks, thyself a sect of thee;
And if he feed not, shall not thy flesh faint?
Or drink not, are not thy lips dead for thirst?

The same mother-love is shown by Andromache when she deplores the death that must come to her child, now that his father is dead. (Tro. 740 ff.)

O darling child, O prized above all price,
Thou must leave thy poor mother, die by foes!

Child, dost thou weep, dost comprehend thy doom?
Why with thy hands clutch, clinging to my robe,
Like fledgling fleeing to nestle 'neath my wings?

O tender nursling, sweet to mother, sweet!
O balmy breath! in vain and all in vain
This breast in swaddling-bands has nurtured thee.
Vainly I travailed and was spent with toils!
Now, and no more forever, kiss thy mother,
Fling thee on her that bare thee, twine thine arms
Around my waist and lay thy lips to mine.

Hecuba laments that the child had died otherwise than in battle, just as Althaea lamented the ill-fate of her brothers: Tro. 1167 ff.

Ah, darling, what ill death has come on thee!
Hadst thou for Troy been slain, when thou hadst known
Youth, wedlock's bliss, and godlike sovereignty,
Blest wert thou—if herein may aught be blest,
But now, once seen and sipped by thy child-soul,
Thine home-bliss fleets forgotten, unenjoyed.

Poor child, how sadly thine ancestral halls,
 Upreared by Loxias, from thine head have shorn
 The curls that oft thy mother softly smoothed
 And kissed, wherefrom through shattered bones forth grins
 Murder—a ghastliness I cannot speak.

Medea, about to slay her children, speaks in a similar strain:

1070 ff.

Give, O babes,
 Give to your mother the right hand to kiss.
 O dearest hand, O lips most dear to me,
 O form and noble features of my children,
 Blessing be on you—there! for all things here
 Your sire hath stolen. Sweet, O sweet embrace!
 O children's roseleaf skin, O balmy breath!
 Away, away! Strength faileth me to gaze
 On you, but I am overcome of evil.

Of this last sentiment Althaea has made much. After she has kindled the brand she addresses the chorus:

I know not if I live;
 Save that I feel the fire upon my face
 And on my cheek the burning of a brand.
 Yea, the smoke bites me, yea I drink the steam
 With nostril and with eyelid and with lip
 Insatiate and intolerant; and mine hands
 Burn, and fire feeds upon mine eyes; I reel
 As one made drunk with living, whence he draws
 Drunken delight; yet I though mad for joy,
 Loathe my long living and am waxen red
 As with the shadow of shed blood; behold,
 I am kindled with the flames that fade in him,
 I am swollen with subsiding of his veins, etc.

It would be easy to multiply examples; perhaps these suffice to show the mental attitude of the two poets. The case in Aesch. Choe. 755 ff. is a good example to show how

Swinburne so often takes an Aeschylean point of view and at once proceeds to treat the subject in true Euripidean manner. The nurse is musing on the infancy of the absent Orestes, under the delusion that he is dead. She is distinctly retrospective as Althaea is always. While the characters in Euripides addresses the child directly. But Swinburne would never use the language of the nurse; it is altogether lacking in his kind of sentiment.

Above all men beside,—
Lo, how am I thrust
Into Hades to hide
My life in the dust!

All vainly I revered god and in vain unto man was I just.

Both cry for death, but the cry of Meleager is like the cry of a delirious man; the pain of Hippolytus more poignant. Hipp. 1370

Let the stricken one be;
Ah mine anguish again;
Give ye sleep unto me,
Death, salve for my pain,

The sleep of the sword for the wretched, I long, O I long to be slain.

Meleager not only desires to die; he even takes thought where he wishes to lie buried, and he has a vision of the world to come.

Would God ye could carry me
Forth of all these,
Heap me and bury me
By the Chersonese

Where the thundering Bosphorus answers the thunder of Pontic seas.

For the dead man no home is;
Ah better to be
What the flower of the foam is
In fields of the sea

That the sea-waves might be as my raiment, the gulf-stream a garment
[of me.

Will ye crown me my tomb
Or exalt me my name,
Now my spirits consume
Now my flesh is a flame?

Let the sea slake it once and men speak of me sleeping to praise me or
[blame.

Would the winds blow me back
Or the waves hurl me home?
Ah to touch in the track
Where the pine learnt to roam

Cold girdles and crowns of the dea-gods, cool blossoms of water and foam.

Not the life of men's veins,
Not of flesh that conceives;
But the grace that remains,
The fair beauty that cleaves

To the life of the rain in the grasses, the life of the dew on the leaves.

The years are hungry,
They wail all their days;
The gods wax angry,
And weary of praise;

And who shall bridle their lips? and who shall straiten their ways?

The cry of Hippolytus is of the immediate present:

Ah for words of a spell
That my soul might take flight
From the tortures, with fell
Unrelentings that smite

O for the blackness of Hades, the sleep of Necessity's night.

Then for his comfort the voice of Artemis speaks.

Unhappy, bowed 'neath what disaster's yoke!
Thine own heart's nobleness hath ruined thee.

He recognizes the voice at once; the form he has never
seen.

Ah perfume breath celestial, mid my pains
I feel thee and mine anguish is assuaged.
Lo, in this place the goddess Artemis.

And she explains to him his plight and shows him why she could not save him; but she promises him vengeance and a festival and a memory preserved in song. She urges him not to hate his father, and seeing the approach of death she takes her leave.

Farewell, I may not gaze upon the dead,
Nor may with dying gasps pollute my sight:
And now I see that thou art near the end.

His last words are with his father. I am gone; I see the gates of death. I absolve you of my death, witness Artemis. My strength is overcome; I am gone. Cover my face with my mantle.

The whole scene is full of pathos, particularly where the youth sees that his death will make no great difference to the goddess and is provoked on account of it to say as Artemis goes out:

Farewell to thy departing, Maiden blest;
Light falls on thee long fellowship's severance.
Lo, I forgive my father at thy suit,
As heretofore have I obeyed thy word.
And o'er my eyes even now the darkness draws.
Take father, take my body and upraise.

When Meleager turns to Atalanta, she reproaches herself after the manner of Helen in *Iliad*, 6, 345 ff.

I would that with feet
Unsandalled, unshod,
Overbold, overfleet,
I had swum not nor trod
From Arcadia to Calydon, northward, a blast of the envy of god.

Helen, addressing Hector, cries:

Would that on the day when my mother bare me at the first, an evil storm-wind had caught me away to a mountain or a billow of the

loud-sounding sea, where the billow might have swept me away before all these things came to pass.

or, as turned by Tennyson:

I would the white, cold, heavy-plunging foam
Whirled by the wind, had rolled me deep below,
Then when I left my home.

For the "envy of god" see *Aes. Per.* 362;
At his next address she becomes more responsive:

Though thou art as fire
Fed with fuel in vain,
My delight, desire,
Is more chaste than the rain,
More pure than the dewfall, more holy than stars are that live without
[stain.

Atalanta replies:

I would that as water
My life's blood had thawed,
Or as winter's wan daughter
Leaves lowland and lawn
Spring-stricken, or ever mine eyes had beheld thee made dark in thy
[dawn.

Meleager sees that he is dying for the sins of others as well as his own. As he takes leave of his father he says:

O holy head of Oeneus, lo thy son
Guiltless, yet red with alien guilt, yet foul
With kinship of contaminated lives,
Lo, for their blood I die; and mine own blood
For bloodshedding of mine is mixed therewith,
That death may not discern me from my kin.

An Euripidean idea; see *Hip.* 1378 ff.

Dire curse of my father,
Sins long ago wrought
Of mine ancestors gather,
Their doom tarries not;

But the scourge overfloweth the innocent,—wherefore on me is it
[brought?

Meleager cries:

Yet with clean heart I die and faultless hand

just as Hippolytus claims:

Innocent I, ever fearing the gods, who was wholly heart-clean.

And the close of this speech of Meleager's is distinctly Greek:

Thou therefore of thy love
Salute me and bid fare among the dead
Well, as the dead fare; for the best man dead
Fares sadly;

See the famous passage in the *Od.* 11, 488 ff.; *Eur. fr.* 537; and *fr. Mel.* 536, the motto of the play.

The kommos that follows seems to me the greatest thing of the kind that I have ever seen. To praise it all words seem inadequate; surely Swinburne was right in a case like this, when he said that it was the business of the reader to rejoice in the song that is sung for him and praise the gift of the singer. As for the song, it is not for him to handle. With this in mind, I shall touch as lightly as possible this great death symphony, although material for comparison is abundant.

Meleager, while crowning Atalanta, is stricken with sudden agony from the kindling of the brand,

and grasping his own hair groaned
And cast his raiment round his face and fell.

Muffling the face at the approach of death seems to be a favorite literary device; even in Shakespere we find

then burst his mighty heart;
And in his mantle muffling up his face,
Even at the base of Pompey's statua,
Which all the while ran blood, great Caesar fell.

The cry of Oeneus at the mishap of Meleager is close to that of Creon in the Medea, when he sees his daughter caught in the meshes of the magic veil:

But the king twitched his reins in and leapt down
And caught him, crying out twice, O child; and thrice,
So that men's eyelids thickened with their tears:

Cf. Medea, 1206 ff.

But ignorant of all, her wretched sire,
Suddenly entering, falls upon her corpse,
And straightway wailed and clasped the body round,
And kissed it, crying, "O my hapless child,
What god thus horribly hath thee destroyed?"

Meleager's cry of pain is much more dignified and full of modern stoicism than that of Hippolytus, but there is much in common in the two death scenes. The dying men are brought in to the sound of mourning. Euripides' chorus announces the coming and draws a sympathetic picture.

Lo, lo, the stricken one borne
Hitherward, with his young flesh torn
And his golden head of its glory shorn.
Ah griefs of the house, what doom
Twofold on thine halls hath come
By the gods' will shrouded in sorrow's gloom.

No translator could make Euripides approach the splendor of the passage in Swinburne, who seems to have gathered from all the world food for a funeral feast such as even the gods had not known till then. The chorus sings in two-verse groups, interrupted by three verses of spoken pentameter. I omit the latter.

Without sword, without sword is he stricken,
 Slain, and slain without hand;
He wastes as the embers quicken,
 With the brand he fades as a brand.
With rending of cheek and of hair,
 Lament, ye, mourn for him, weep;
Alas, for visions that were,
 And soothsayings spoken in sleep.
Lament with a long lamentation,
 Cry, for an end is at hand.
Cry aloud, O thou kingdom, O nation,
 O stricken, a ruinous land.
Thou art smitten, her lord, her desire,
 Thy dear blood wasted as rain,
Thou madest thy sword as a fire,
 With fire for a sword thou art slain.

Alcestis wastes away in the same manner but to no such beautiful music. Cf. *Alcestis* 201 ff.

(Admetus) weeps and clasps his dear one in his arms
And prays, "Forsake me not," asking the while
The impossible, for still she wanes and wastes,
Drooping her head, a misery-burdened weight;
But yet, albeit hardly breathing still,
To the sun's rays fain would she lift her eyes,
As nevermore, but for the last time now
Destined to see the sun's beam and his orb.

The chorus adds its lament:

Cry, land Pheraean, shrill and keen!
Lift up thy voice to wail thy best
There dying, and thy queenliest
Slow wasting to the gates unseen.

Swinburne was right in this instance at least; it is easy for him to tower head and shoulders above Euripides. Way, who evidently saw in Swinburne's great kommos a reminiscence of the lament of Hippolytus, has translated the verse of Euripides in the Swinburne stanza form, and given it some touches of Swinburnian color; but his effort goes only to show how inferior Euripides, or Way, or any one is to the Master of that particular form. Way has thought enough of it to use it in other plays; e. g. *Iph. Aul.* 1279 ff.; *Alcestis*, chor. 112 ff.; 912 ff. etc.

Hippolytus, while being borne to his father's house, directs his thralls how to carry him, and cries aloud in his agony. Meleager, in thirteen stanzas, each of which is answered by the chorus, or Oeneus, or Atalanta, reviews his past life. Althaea sits by in grim silence, the incarnation of Fate. Swinburne's treatment is marvelous in its dignity, elegance and poetic beauty. Hippolytus repeats the reproach against his father;

Woe, woe for a son
By the doom of his sire
All marred and undone,
Through my head leapeth fire
Of agony flashes, and throbberth my brain like a hard-smitten lyre.

Meleager has more self-control:

Let your hands meet
Round the weight of my head;
Lift ye my feet
As the feet of the dead;
For the flesh of my body is molten, the limbs of it molten as lead.

In this is a little of Phaedra's appeal:

Uplift ye my body, mine head upraise,
Friends, faint be my limbs, and unknit be their bands,
Hold, maidens, my rounded arms and my hands.

The pain and suffering of Hippolytus seems very real:

For gods' sake, bear
Me gently each thrall;
Thou to right have a care,
Soft let your hands fall;
Tenderly bear the sore mangled, onstepping in tune, one and all,
The unhappy onbearing
And cursèd, I ween,

(then referring his own innocence to Zeus, he regards himself as Virtue abused)

Of his father's own erring
Ah Zeus, hast thou seen?
Innocent I, ever fearing the gods, who was wholly heart-clean.

ERECHTHEUS

Swinburne chose for the motto of the Erechtheus two verses from Pindar, fr. 47:

*ὦ τὰ λῖπαραὶ καὶ ἰστέφανοι καὶ αἰῶνιοι,
Ἑλλάδας ἔρεισμα, κλειναὶ Ἀθῆναι, δαιμόνιον πτολίεθρον.*

and two from Aeschylus, Persae, 241 f.

*Ατοσσα. τίς δὲ ποιμάνωρ ἔπεστι κάπιδεσπόζει στρατοῦ;
χορος. οὔτινος δοῦλοι κέκληνται φωτὸς οὐδ' ὑπηκοί.*

One expresses his appreciation of the wealth and splendor of the ancient city, while the other states the characteristic attitude of the Athenian toward his native land. This theme of devotion to native land recurs in many places in the works of Swinburne, throughout his entire career.

STRUCTURE

1. Prologue.....	1- 94
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7. Third Episode.....	641- 753
8. Third Stasimon, with Kommos.....	754- 889
9. Fourth Episode.....	890-1074
10. Fourth Stasimon, with Kommos.....	1076-1190
11. Fifth Episode.....	1191-1240
12. Fifth Stasimon.....	1241-1252
13. Sixth Episode.....	1253-1282
14. Sixth Stasimon, with Kommos.....	1283-1483
15. Seventh Episode.....	1484-1623
16. Seventh Stasimon.....	1624-1643
17. Exodos.....	1644-1760

PROLOGUE

The prologue of the *Erechtheus* is a monologue like that of the *Atalanta*. It is longer, however, by thirty lines, and, so, nearly three times the length of that of the *Agamemnon*. It gives about as much direct information as we find in an Aeschylean prologue, but it is not at all Aeschylean in its method. Structurally it is very complex, and abounds in subtle allusion. No extant Greek prologue reveals half the erudition. We are told that Athens is threatened with destruction. The king laments that the oracle demands the sacrifice of his child to save the ship of state from the rocks. (Aeschylean figure; see *Septem*, 1 ff.) He prays his mother (Earth) to strengthen the city.

Lines 1–22 resemble an Euripidean genealogy, referring to the king in eight different aspects, rather than to eight different characters, as might have been the case in Euripides. *Erechtheus* calls Earth's attention to himself; behold me, thy son, men-crowned, thy child, fosterling of Pallas, reared in her shade, hallowing her fame in feasts, first to tame steeds, the king. Lines 23–43 are full of Euripidean sentimentality. After line 43 the emotion becomes more intense. His cry is for help; save thou our city. The cry of Eteocles, in the *Septem* of Aeschylus, is to the people of the city of Cadmus; 'save your common mother earth, for it was she, when you walked as children on her kindly soil, brought you up to be her colonists and trusty champions, that you might become such for an emergency like this.' One calls to the earth for help; the other asks help for the Earth. As Swinburne himself has disclaimed all Euripidean influence, and declared his play an imitation of the earlier style of Aeschylus, if of anything, and as some of his most important critics accept

this as a statement of fact, let us see how it applies to the Septem, the prologue of which lies under the same impending cloud of calamity. Thebes is threatened on land, Athens, from the sea. In each case the king speaks the prologue. Both use the 'ship of state' figure. Erechtheus calls on Earth and asks why the gods are against him. Eteocles trusts in the defense of his army. They must save their altars and their children and their mother earth. The gods have been favorable up to this time; there is no reason to fear a change of attitude on their part. Haste to the battlements, man the parapets. Aeschylus emphasizes the importance of the state and minimizes that of the king; Swinburne emphasizes the anxiety of a king who has been interrupted in the exercise of his sovereignty. He is quite sure of his dignity and his divine associations and has decked them with Pindaric splendor. The pomp and verbosity is more than Aeschylean; and there is added a certain loud-voiced, high-pitched wordiness, which is Swinburne at his worst.

ERECHTHEUS

The theme of the Erechtheus is the sacrifice of a maiden at the command of a god. The plot is based on that of the lost Erechtheus of Euripides, three of whose extant dramas deal with a similar subject. 'Macaria dies to save the race of the Heracleidae; Iphigeneia, to prosper the cause of the Greek fleet; Alcestis, to save the life of her husband. In each of these three cases a divine voice had declared that some one must die; in each, the heroine required was purely passive; and in each a definite gain was promised. (See Jebb, *Antigone*, Intr. xxxiv.)

Such is the situation in Swinburne's *Erechtheus*. Thus he explains the case to his queen:

The word that journeying to the bright God's shrine
Who speaks askance and darkling, but his name
Hath in it slaying and ruin broad writ out,
I heard, hear thou: thus saith he; There shall die
One soul for all this people; from thy womb
Came forth the seed that here on dry bare ground
Death's hand must sow untimely, to bring forth
Nor blade nor shoot in season, being by name
To the under Gods made holy, who require
For this land's life her death and maiden blood
To save a maiden city.

Euripides records Agamemnon's statement thus:

Now when the gathered host together came,
At Aulis did we tarry weather-bound.
Then the seer Calchas bade in our despair
Slay Iphigeneia, her whom I begat,
To Artemis who dwelleth in this land;
So should we voyage, and so Phrygia smite;
But if we slew her not, it should not be.

In the chorus of the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus, 150 ff. we have a reference to the same sacrifice, and again in 200, where the word *ἐκλαγξον* is used of the declaration of Calchas. This Swinburne seems to have had in mind when he wrote, in reference to the prophecy cited above:

If this ring worse I know not; strange it rang.

In the *Heracleidae*, where the salvation of Athens is at stake, as in the *Erechtheus*, Iolaus refers to the oracle thus:
488 ff.

For oracle-chanters, saith the king, proclaim
That he must bid to slay nor bull nor calf,

But a maid, daughter of a high-born sire,
 If we, if Athens must not cease to be.
 This then is our despair: the king refuseth
 To slay his own or any other child,
 And saith to me,—albeit not in words,—
 Except we find for this some remedy,
 We must needs forth and seek another land;
 But his own land he cannot choose but save.

Macaria's first speech is very similar in tone to Chthonia's. They both come out and address the chorus, and both offer a modest apology for intruding. Eur. *Heracleidae*, 474 ff.

Strangers, impute not for my coming forth
 Boldness to me; this is my first request;
 Since for a woman silence and discretion
 Be fairest, and still tarrying in the home.
 But Iolaus, I heard thy moans and came,—
 Though I be not ordained mine house's head:
 Yet in some sort it fits me, for I love
 These brothers more than all: yea, mine own fate
 Fain would I learn,—lest to the former ills
 Some new pang added now torments thy soul.

At the cry of the chorus Chthonia also enters.

Forth of the fine-spun folds of veils that hide
 My virgin chamber toward the full-faced sun
 I set my foot and moved of mine own will,
 Unmaiden-like, nor with unprompted speed
 Turn eyes too broad or doglike unabashed
 On reverend heads of men and thence on thine,
 Mother, now covered from the light and bowed
 As hers who mourns her brethren; but what grief
 Bends thy blind head thus earthward, holds thee mute,
 I know not till thy will be to lift up
 Toward mine thy sorrow-muffled eyes and speak;
 And till thy will be would I know not this.

In both plays a battle is the deciding factor. Swinburne is much more brilliant and spectacular, but Euripides is not without his prodigies. He gives us an example of an old man made young and showing deeds of prowess far beyond his age. He also gave Swinburne a hint for several of his fine lines. The battle grows in fury:

Anon foot stood in grapple locked with foot,
Man fronting man, hard-wrestling in the fray. (Her. 836 f.)

So Swinburne speaks of the limbs of the contestants

To be locked as in wrestle together, and lighten
With fire that shall darken thy fire in the sky,
Body to body and eye against eye
In a war against kind.

The sacrifice of the maiden is pictured very strikingly in the Iphigeneia and the picture is not without its influence on Swinburne, although he wilfully kept Aeschylus' version in mind. Both Chthonia and Iphigeneia sing a lament in anticipation of death. Chthonia's is in kommos form and is in its structure somewhat like the lament of Antigone. Iphigeneia sings first of the fatal judgment of Paris, then laments her own end. The passage is one of great beauty. In the dialogue that follows, she suddenly experiences a change of heart; she wishes to die for her country, and she wishes to thrust aside cowardly thoughts and die gloriously. All Greece looks to her; she alone can bestow the boon of the sailing of the ships, and the overthrow of Phrygia and safety for the years to come.

All this great deliverance I in death shall compass, and my name
As one who gave to Hellas freedom shall be blessing-crowned.

My body unto Hellas I resign.

Sacrifice me, raze ye Troy; for this through all the ages is
My memorial; children, marriage, glory—all are mine in this.

So Chthonia to her mother:

Thou brought'st me forth a savior who shall save
Athens; for none but I from none but thee
Shall take this death for garland; and the men
Mine unknown children of unsounded years,
My sons unrisen shall rise up at thine hand,
And call thee most of all most fruitful found
Blessed; but me too for my barren womb
More than my sisters for their children born
Shall these give honor; yea, in scorn's own place
Shall men set love and bring for mockery praise
And thanks for curese;

Chthonia's lyrical farewell, "I lift up mine eyes from the skirts of the shadow," is a farewell to Athens, built on a web of mythological allusion. Like all the lyrics in the play, it is technically perfect, but is somewhat cold and unconvincing; when we reach the conclusion, 'I go to my death,' we are more inclined to hope that she will attain her goal, than to give her of our sympathy, she has spoken so many farewells! Turning to the Iphigeneia we find about the same conditions. There is rhesis, stichomythia, triumphal procession, closing with the last words of the victim; a cry to Mycenae:

For a light unto Hellas thou fosteredst me,
And I die—O freely I die for thee.

Hail, light divine!
Hail day, in whose hands doth the world's torch shine!
In a strange new life must I dwell,
And a strange new lot must be mine.
Farewell, dear light, farewell.

At the sacrifice Swinburne paints a very roseate picture of the victim, trembling with pride in pleasure, proud because she was not pale with fear.

Her cheeks lightened and brighter than a bridal veil
 Her hair enrobed her bosom and enrolled
 From face to feet the body's whole soft length
 As with a cloud sun-saturate:

Euripides paints no pre-sacrificial picture. The messenger reports that Agamemnon groaned at the sight of his child, who approached and addressed him as follows:

My father, at thine hest I come
 And for my country's sake my body give
 And for all Hellas, to be led of you
 Unto the goddess' altar willingly,
 And sacrificed, if this is Heaven's decree.
 Prosper, so far as rests with me and win
 Victory, and return to fatherland.
 Then let no Argive lay a hand on me:
 Silent, unflinching will I yield my neck.

Chthonia also spoke, not to her father, but to her countrymen,

With maiden tongue words manlike, but her eyes
 Lit mildly like a maiden's: Countrymen,
 With more goodwill and height of happier heart
 I give me to you than my mother hare,
 And go more gladly this great way to death
 Than young men bound for battle. Then with face
 Turned to the shadowiest part of all the shrine
 And eyes fast set upon the further shade,
 Take me, dear gods; and as some form had shone
 From the deep hollow shadow, some god's tongue
 Answered, I bless you that your guardian grace
 Gives me to guard this country, takes my blood,
 Your child's by name, to heal it.

In the Agamemnon the story of the sacrifice is told by the chorus (228-47)

Her prayers and cries her father's ears that sought,
 Her maiden bloom they heedless set at naught,

Those war-enraptured judges gathered there.
Her father bade the attendants after prayer
The maiden drooping prone to quick upraise
Even as a kid above the altar blaze,
Her robes about her spread, and with a guard
Of her sweet lips within to compass hard
By force of bonds and might that muffles thought
Her voice with curses for the palace fraught.

And she to earth her saffron robe let fall
And smote her very slayers one and all
With piteous eyes that cast out pity's darts
To strike in vain those cold unpitying hearts,
Clearer than in a picture, fain to speak, etc.

The chorus saw no more; it was not a picture to paint too
clearly to the audience. In the Iphigeneia the priest
makes his preparations for the sacrifice,

Laid down a keen knife which his hand had drawn
Out of its sheath, then crowned the maiden's head.

Then Peleus' son cried:

Zeus' daughter, slayer of wild beasts,
Whose wheels of light roll splendors through the gloom—
(Cf. Sw. One day more I see the world's of the circling sun
Roll up rejoicing to regard on earth
This one thing goodliest.)

But the sacrifice is interrupted; the maiden has dis-
appeared. Swinburne, however, carries it on to the bitter
end.

Then the priest
Set to the flower-sweet snow of her soft throat
The sheer knife's edge that severed it, and loosed
From the fair bondage of so spotless flesh
So strong a spirit; and all that girt them round
Gazing, with souls that hung on that sad stroke,
Groaned, and kept silence after while a man

Might count how far the fresh blood crept, and bathed
 How deep the dark robe's and the bright shrine's base
 Red-rounded with a running ring that grew
 More large and duskier as the wells that fed
 Were drained of that pure effluence;

In Lucretius we find an account of the same sacrifice.

Soon as the fillet encircling her maiden tresses shed itself in equal lengths adown each cheek, and soon as she saw her father standing sorrowful before the altars and beside him the ministering priests, hiding the knife and her countrymen at sight of her shedding tears, speechless in terror she dropped down on her knees and sank to the ground. Nor aught in such a moment could it avail the luckless girl that she had first bestowed the name of father on the king. For lifted up in the arms of the men she was carried shivering to the altars, not after due performance of the customary rites to be escorted by the clear-ringing bridal song, but in the very season of marriage, stainless maid mid the stain of blood, to fall a sad victim to the sacrificing stroke of a father, that thus a happy and prosperous departure might be granted to the fleet. So great are the evils to which religion could prompt.

Lucretius' view is contemptuous, Swinburne's ecstatic, Aeschylus' pathetic, and Euripides' melodramatic. Each has manipulated the same material in his own way. It might be interesting to compare Tennyson's effort:

I was cut off from hope in that sad place,
 Which men called Aulis in those iron years;
 My father held his hand upon his face;
 I, blinded with my tears,

Still strove to speak; my voice was thick with signs
 As in a dream; dimly I could descry
 The stern black-bearded kings with wolfish eyes
 Waiting to see me die.

The high masts flickered as they lay afloat
 The crowds, the temples, wavered, and the shore;
 The bright death quivered at the victim's throat;
 Touched; and I knew no more.

THE CHARACTERS

Erechtheus may be viewed in four lights; as king, warrior, husband, father. He appears as king in the prologue, appealing to his mother Earth for information as to the cause of the plague just fallen upon his state. He speaks with ostentatious pride of his ancestry, pictures his land in loving terms, glances at the impending ruin, and puns in true Greek manner on the name of his foe. He speaks with reverence of the gods who have sent upon him for some dark reason, 'the confluent surge of loud calamities.' His prayer closes with an appeal for help.

As a warrior, his interview with the herald shows him ready and confident. He speaks no word of temporizing, no haggling about terms; he will fight, and die or live, as his lot lies on the lap of the unknown hour. He has had divine information that he is to win and die, and he is in accord with his fate. The report of the Athenian herald makes him a successful leader who attained a heroic and supernatural end.

The attitude of Erechtheus to Praxithea is very unusual for a Greek play. His language is all love and admiration; he has found her from all times wise and perfect of heart. Moreover, he has found her free from hybris in prosperity, a condition of heart he implies to be exceptional, so that now when sorrow has come upon him he dreads to shock her with its weight. He tries the temper of her fortitude by considerable riddling speech, and closes by offering her a choice of evils, the culmination of which is death.

but we for all our good things, we
Have at their hands (the gods') which fill all these folk full
Death, barrenness, child-slaughter, curses, cares,
Sea-leaguer and land-shipwreck; which of these,
Which wilt thou first give thanks for? all are thine.

Having satisfied himself of her fortitude, he relates the oracle of Apollo. She does not disappoint him, but shows herself to be a strong and sympathetic character. In fact Swinburne has succeeded in doing the unusual in portraying two strong and admirable characters in perfect accord. Both recognize the might of Necessity and seek no escape; both feel the injustice of Fate, while recognizing the importance of their sacrifice for the safety of their city. The daughter, too, accepts her doom without a protest. The crisis has swooped suddenly upon them all, and they have met it unhesitatingly and with clear discernment. In the Iphigeneia at Aulis the situation is somewhat different. The host has been long detained, and finally Calchas has proclaimed the price the gods demand for sailing. Agamemnon, somewhat craven and fearing overmuch the host (cf. 1. 1012), has sent for his daughter with the alleged purpose of giving her in marriage to Achilles. His duplicity merits all the scorn poured upon him by his outraged wife. But Iphigeneia, after prayers and tears and lamentations, by a sudden change of heart expresses a willingness to die, and thus brings about a reconciliation. Swinburne's characters are more admirable; Euripides', more human. The turbulent English poet has given us a pair of Philosophers who curb their own hearts because they recognize the necessity at once; the Greek sophist has given us two human beings who bluster and rail in a very human way at the slings and arrows of fortune, to fall before them in the end.

As a father, Erechtheus is not very well drawn. He does not greet his daughter throughout the play, and his chief concern for her seems to be on his wife's account. On the other hand, some of the finest touches in the Iphigeneia

come in the scenes where father and daughter appear.
Her appeal to him is very childlike and pathetic. 1221 ff.

Sweet is light: Constrain me not to see the nether gloom.

'Twas I first called thee father, thou me child.

'Twas I first throned my body on thy knees,

And gave thee sweet caresses and received.

And this thy word was; Ah, my little maid,

Blest shall I see thee in a husband's halls

Living and blooming worthily of me?

And as I twined my fingers in thy beard,

Whereto I now cling, thus I answered thee; etc.

Agamemnon makes clear the necessity of his case.
1255 ff.

I know what asketh pity, what doth not,

Who love mine own babes I were madman else.

Awful it is, wife, to dare this deed,

Yet awful to forbear. I *must* do this!

Mark ye yon countless host with galleys fenced,

And all the brazen-harnessed Hellend kings,

Who cannot voyage unto Ilium's towers,

Who cannot raze Troy's citadel renowned,

But by thy blood, as Calchas saith, the seer.

A fiery passion maddeneth Hellas' host

To sail in all haste to the aliens' land

And put an end to rapes of Hellene wives.

My daughters will they slay in Argos,—you

And me.—if I annul the Goddess' hest.

Not Menelaus hath enslaved me, child,

Nor yet to serve his pleasure have I come.

'Tis Hellas for whom,—will I, will I not—

I must slay thee: this cannot we withstand.

Free must she be, so far as in thee lies,

And me, child; nor by aliens' violence

Must sons of Hellas of their wives be spoiled.

His case is clear: the gods have exacted a price for the
overthrow of Ilium. This price Agamemnon is not willing

to pay, for it concerns him too personally. But his fellow-chieftains, less interested in the price, and more interested in the profit, insist on payment. With Erechtheus the case is different. The god set the price of ransoming the city in such a way that the royal family must perish in either alternative. Chthonia must be sacrificed and the king must fall in battle to insure the safety of the city, the destruction of which meant the ruin of every one. And perhaps it is just as well that a father take no leave of his daughter at whose sacrifice he will later be the presiding officer.

Erechtheus, under provocation, assumes a temper toward the gods similar to Althaea's, with this difference, however, that it is under better control. He draws a sharp distinction between the joy of the citizens in the safety of their state, and their praise of the gods for the sparing of their lives, and his own situation:

To these they give
Life of their children, flower of all their seed,
For all their travail fruit, for all their hopes
Harvest; but we, for all our good things, we
Have at their hands which fill all these folk full
Death, barrenness, child-slaughter, curses, cares,
Sea-leaguer and land-shipwreck;

He graces Apollo with all his epithets, but reserves his praise. He accepts the grim situation because

save this
No word is left us and no hope alive.

To the herald of Eumolpus he recognizes the omnipotence of the gods; of their wisdom or loving-kindness he says nothing. A grim character, his language is very compressed; he says much more in brief space than is the wont

of Swinburne's characters. He is stronger than the Aeschylean Agamemnon, who also put on the yoke of necessity and became the slayer of his child. Both have to submit to the divine decree, in regard to the justice of which both are in the dark. Agamemnon found it hard to sacrifice his daughter, but harder to become a *λιπόνους*; the word is very strong: so of the two evils he chose what seemed the lesser, and offered his child to the malice of stubborn winds.

PRAXITHEA

Praxithea is a woman worthy of the love and respect of her royal husband. She is brave, dutiful, submissive, and self-sacrificing. In her first speech she sums up in brief her entire philosophy of life. At the king's hint of bloodshed, she offers herself at once as the victim. Her heart is all for her land. "Firm let it stand, whatever bleed or fall." In her treatment of her daughter, she is very tender, displaying the attitude of the best women in Greek drama, which seems to have been more fond and intimate than that of the women of modern literature. To deaden the shock of her hard lot, she brings forward and emphasizes the idea of "motherland," which is worth all and more than they will lose in the sacrifice. But Swinburne could not save her from the long rhesis calling the gods to witness her ills, and showing her great antiquarian knowledge and her familiarity with the institutions of gods and men. She closes with a childhood picture in true Euripidean-Swinburnian manner. It seems to be the peculiarity of both these writers to put such speeches in the mouths of women; they make them the fountains of diverse information and the fountain-heads of tears. Swinburne has condemned rather bitterly the long fragment of Euripides, on which he based this rhesis, but it is doubtful if he has given us a startling example of superiority, as he implies. (See E. Gosse, Swinburne, p. 231.) The massing of fable and folk lore and reminiscences from almost every Greek

writer that one would meet in a long period of time, does not make easy reading, and to many smacks somewhat of a handbook. That is the impression one, familiar with such things, might get. If unfamiliar, he is apt to be overwhelmed, and wonder what it is all about. Even the experienced Greek scholar is in danger of being dazzled and confused by the kaleidoscopic changes from reminiscences of one author to those of another.

In Praxithea's speech of farewell to her daughter, she comments on the gods in Euripidean fashion. She is innocent of wrong-doing; she has suffered much and for many causes; and she has merited none of it. But she will hold her peace. After she has shown that from the heartless gods no help comes, her speech is a fine piece of Euripidean tenderness and pathos. The picture of the babe is one of the finest ever drawn. For the sake of her people she gives her child to

Death and the under Gods who crave
So much for what they give.

She sets aside, however, her personal loss for the sake of her country. Her sacrifice wrests from ruin the power to take hold on Athens. When one loves the life of

child, wife, father, friend,
Son, husband, mother, more than this, even there
Are all these lives worth nothing, all loves else
With love slain and buried, and their tomb
A thing for shame to spit on; for what love
Hath a slave heart to love with? or the heart
Base-born and bound in bondage fast to fear,
What should it do to love thee? what hath he,
The man that hath no country? Gods nor men
Have such to friend, yoked beast-like to base life,

Vile, fruitless, groveling at the foot of death,
 Landless and kinless thralls of no man's blood,
 Unchilded and unmothered, abject limbs
 That breed things abject; but who loves on earth
 Not friend, wife, husband, father, mother, child,
 Nor loves his own life for his own land's sake,
 But only this thing most, more this than all,
 He loves all well and well of all is loved,
 And this love lives forever.

To slavery Swinburne has taken a somewhat scornful attitude. The Greeks regarded it with more pathos, especially when it was a question of their own country.

When the herald comes to report on the battle, she greets him with an eagerness that is mingled with fierceness.

Man, what thy mother bare thee horn to say
 Speak; for no word yet wavering on thy lip
 Can wound me worse than thought forestalls or fear.

On learning the fate of her husband and the city she praises the gods of Athens and prays for death. Her isolation is complete; she has nothing to live for.

Be thou,
 Dear God and gracious to all souls alive,
 Good to thine own seed also; let me sleep,
 Father: my sleepless darkling day is done,
 My day of life like night, but slumberless:
 For all my fresh fair springs, and his that ran
 In one stream's bed with mine, are all run out
 Into the deep of death. The Gods have saved
 Athens; my blood has bought her at their hand,
 And ye sit safe; be glorious and be glad
 As now for all time always, countrymen,
 And love my dead forever; but me, me,
 What shall man give for these so good as death?

PARODOS

Swinburne has not used an Aeschylean motivation for his parodos in the *Erechtheus*; in fact there seems to be none. This chorus is but the echo of the prologue, *Erechtheus* has just prayed to Earth for help;

Though all our house die for this people's sake,
Keep thou for ours thy crown our city, guard
And give it life the lovelier that we died.

Thereupon the chorus, on a higher plane, to the greater gods, makes the same supplication,—to the gods whose interests have been before at stake, Pallas and Poseidon. Then the contest between this god and goddess for the naming of the fair city is reviewed, and the fair city is named and characterized in a very remarkable passage of fourteen lines based on Aeschylean and Pindaric reminiscences. He weaves in both quotations that serve as mottoes for the play.

The fruitful anointed immortal adored
Dear city of men without master or lord,
Fair fortress and fostress of sons born free,
Who stand in her sight and in thine, O sun,
Slaves of no man, subject to none;
A wonder enthroned on the hills and sea,
A maiden crowned with a fourfold glory
That none from the pride of her head may rend,
Violet and olive-leaf purple and hoary,
Song-wreath and story the fairest of fame,
Flowers that the winter can blast not or bend;
A light upon earth as the sun's own flame,
A name as his name,
Athens, a praise without end.

Now this fair territory is in danger of being encroached upon;

For the sea-marks set to divide of old
The kingdoms to Ocean and Earth assigned,
The hoar sea-fields from the cornfields' gold,
His wine-bright waves from her vineyards' fold,
Frail forces we find
To bridle the spirit of Gods or bind
Till the heat of their hearts wax cold.

Cf. Horace, O. 1; 3; 21 ff.

Nequiquam deus abscedit
Prudens oceano dissociabili
terras—

Ovid, Met. 1, 22 Nam caelo terras et terris abscedit undas. Swinburne has added the Homeric touch in the "hoar sea-fields" and "his wine-bright waves." The figure of the 'bridle' is frequent in Aeschylus, though it is not applied to the mouth of any god. We find the same figure in the first line of the third stasimon:

Who shall put a bridle in the mourner's lips to chasten them,
Or seal up the fountains of his tears for shame?

The violet is a favorite flower in Greek, and is used for many purposes. See Pindar, fr. 47; 75, 7; 75, 18; Aristoph. Eq. 1329; Achar. 636; For the hoary olive, see Soph. O. C. 701; Pin. 0.3, 13;

From the strife of Athena and Poseidon the chorus turns to a new strife arisen on the city; a sound of battle come up from the sea.

Strange hunters are hard on us, hearts without pity;
They have staked their nets round the fair young city,
That the sons of her strength and her virgin daughters
Should find not whither alive to flee.

These hunters follow on the unseen track of oar-blades after Paris, Ag. 695; they cast a close-wrought net over the towers of Troy, Ag. 358; and they throw a net of slavery over the inhabitants, Ag. 361.

From the navel of earth and the veiled mid-altar
We wait for a token with hopes that falter,

"The navel of earth" occurs in Aesch. Eum. 40 and 166; also in Pindar, N. 7, 33. For an interesting and unusual account of the birth of Pallas, see Hesiod, Theog. Also Pin. O, 7, 36; and fr. 34, 9.

Swinburne closes the chorus with a double myth, in the manner of Euripides, but particularly applicable here because of the relation of the maidens carried away, to Erechtheus. The story of Orithyia is told in Ovid., Met. VI; and Procris, in Met. VII.

For the third wave signifying the culmination of calamity, see Aes. Pr. 1015. Swinburne uses the expression again in *The Triumph of Time*:

It is not much that a man can save
On the sands of life, in the straits of time,
Who swims in sight of the great third wave
That never a swimmer shall cross or climb.

Orithyia and Procris were gone; now there is danger of losing Chthonia.

Chthonia mentions the rape of her sister:

From the bloom of whose banks as a prey
Winds carried my sister away;

and later the chorus speaks of it again:

O strong north wind, the pilot of cloud and rain,
For the gift that we gave thee what gift hast thou given us again?
O god dark-winged, deep-throated, a terror to forth-faring ships by night,
What bride-song is this that is blown on the blast of thy breath?

There is much in the second part of this chorus that suggests the parodos of the Septem. There is this difference, however; the chorus in that play is composed of women who are thoroughly terrified, while the chorus of elders in the Erechtheus are inclined to be fault-finding. Theirs is not the Aeschylean theme that sin calls for sorrow; they ask what they have done, and suggest that the god has done enough. The genealogy of Pallas,

O thou not born of the womb or bred
In the bride-night's warmth of a changed god's bed,
But thy life as the lightning was flashed from the light of thy father's
[head,

O chief god's child by a motherless birth,

is reminiscent of the prologues of Euripides. Aeschylus, however, makes use of the same literary device. See Septem, 128 f.; 123-5.

There is no motivation for the episode that follows; the chorus finishes its prayer and the king begins to speak of his wife. Nothing could be more unlike the manner of Aeschylus.

FIRST EPISODE

In the first episode Erechtheus informs his wife of the decree of Apollo. In this scene we get a very fine example of the perfect adjustment of the love between husband and wife. He tells her he has found her wise, perfect of heart, free from insolence in prosperity, and brave in adversity, but now

I fear
To slay thee timeless with my proper tongue
With lips, thou knowest, that love thee; and such work
Was never laid of gods on men, such word
No mouth of man learnt ever, as from mine
Most loth to speak thine ear most loth shall take
And hold it hateful as the grave to hear.

She convinces him that she can endure the tale, so he reveals the oracle.

The word that journeying to the bright God's shrine (Phoibos)
Who speaks askance and darkling (Loxias) but his name
Hath in it slaying and ruin broad writ out (Apollo)
I heard, hear thou, thus saith he; there shall die
One soul for all his people; from thy womb
Came forth the seed that here on dry bare ground
Death's hand must sow untimely to bring forth
Nor blade nor shoot in season, being by name
To the under gods made holy, who require
For this land's life her death and maiden blood
To save a maiden city.

Throughout this scene Swinburne is reminiscent of the *Alcestis*. Praxithea speaks:

But if thou speak of blood, and I that hear
Be chosen of all for this land's love to die
And save to thee thy city, know this well,
Happiest I hold me of her seed alive.

So *Alcestis*, 282 ff.

Admetus, for thou seest all my plight,
Fain would I speak mine heart's wish ere I died.
I, honoring thee and setting thee in place
Before mine own soul still to see this light,
Am dying, unconstrained to die for thee.

There is a fine effect of Aeschylean piling up of substantives in

we, for all our good things, we
Have at their hands which fill all these folks full,
Death, barrenness, child-slaughter, curses, cares,
Sea-leaguer and land-shipwreck;

So in Ag.

πνοαὶ δ' ἀπὸ Στρυμόνος μολοῦσαι
κακόσχολοι, νήστιδες, δύσορμοι,
βροτῶν ἅλαι,
νεῶν τε καὶ πεισμάτων ἀφειδέεις,
παλιμμήκη χρόνον τιθεῖσαι
τρίβῳ κατέξαινον ἄνθος Ἀργοῖς.

Ag. 192 ff.

(The blasts from Strymon ever downward hasting,
Evil-delaying, famine-winged, rope-wasting,
Wanderings of men,
Of ships and moorings one and all unsparing,
And time made ever double for their sharing,
The flower of Argos wasted to outwearing.)

In Praxithea's last speech there is an unusual Aeschylean figure in

But most for this I thank them most of all,
That this *their edge of doom* is chosen to pierce
My heart and not my country's;

The same figure occurs in Aes. Per. 407; 1060

The significance of names is shown at the close of Erechtheus' last speech; referring to Chthonia, he says:

—being my name
To the under gods made holy, who require
For this land's life her death and maiden blood.

He closes his speech and leaves the stage clear for the stasimon, by saying:

Thus I heard,
And thus with all said leave thee; for save this
No word is left us and no hope alive.

Praxithea seems to be left on the stage.

SECOND STASIMON

The chorus, at this point, like the chorus in the *Septem*, takes an active interest in the action of the play. It comments on the speech of Erechtheus and offers its protest to death. We get a reminiscence of the *Atalanta* in "The master that lightens not hearts he enlightens, but gives them fore-knowledge of death" Cf. *Atalanta*, 357; In his eyes foreknowledge of death. Swinburne often repeats in his later poems, giving it an added touch, an idea from his earlier work. This is noticeable in *Aeschylus*, also; ideas may be found, for example, in the *Septem*, which he repeated in more ample form in the *Agamemnon*.

SECOND EPISODE

The second episode is between mother and daughter and is Euripidean in its *ῥηθός*, showing the strong affection and confidence that existed between the two. Erechtheus is gone, and so far as we know, does not see his daughter again until the sacrifice. Chthonia comes out and greets her mother who has remained on the scene during the singing of the stasimon. There is a reminiscence of the delicacy and fine garments of the Persian women in the *Persae* in

Forth from the fine spun folds of veils that hide
My virgin chamber toward the full-faced sun,

and in her mother's comment to the chorus on her daughter's beauty:

her gait
How virginal, how soft her speech, her eyes
How seemly smiling!

See *Aes. Per.* 543.

The scene between Hecuba and Polyxena has much in common with this. She comes out at the sound of her mother's bitter lament to ask the cause of her tears. Hecuba, 177 ff. Chthonia is Aeschylean in her self-control. Pl.

O mother, my mother, what meaneth thy crying?
What strange dread thing
Is this that thou heraldest
That hath scared me, like a bird forth-flying
On startled wing
Out of the peace of her nest.

Dumb are ye all, bowed eyes and tongueless mouths:

There is shown the same affection between mother and daughter. The latter laments bitterly her sacrifice, for she is to be offered to the shade of the man who destroyed her city.

Praxithea tells the chorus how helpless they are;

Dumb are ye all, bowed eyes and tongueless mouths;

the same attitude that Atossa took, in her fear of the omen. Per. 206, φόβῳ δ' ἄφθογγος ἐστάθην, φίλοι. The maiden hesitates to turn eyes too broad or dog-like, unabashed on the chorus and on her mother. This, of course, is a distorted Homeric reference, cf. 1, 225; 3, 180. Praxithea bids Chthonia take note of all the writing on her face

As of a tablet of a tomb inscribed
That bears me record.

At the close of a hundred lines she decides that it is of no avail.

Turn from me, turn thine eyes,
A little from me; I can bear not yet
To see if still they smile on mine or no

Praxithea's long rhesis closes the scene. She has already charged the girl to lay up her words in her heart:

yet I charge thee learn
And love and lay this up within thine heart,
Even this my word.

See Od. 4, 399 f.

τοι γὰρ ἐγὼν ἐρέω, σὺ δ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῆσιν

"From the grey, fruitless waters" is a combination of the Homeric

ἀτρύγετον πόντον γλαυκὴ . . . θάλασσα

In this rhesis we get a second rehearsal of the Orithyia-Boreas episode; likewise of the strife between Poseidon and Athena for the domination of Athens.

Then we get a well-known figure of reaping.

as the fields
Were landward harried from the north with swords
Aonian, sickles of man-slaughtering edge
Ground for no hopeful harvest of live grain
Against us in Boeotia.

Cf. Hor. O. 4, 14, 31

primosque et extremos metendo
Stravit humum sine claude victor.

Catul. 63, 354 ff.

Namque velut densas praecerpens messor aristas
Sole sub ardenti flaventia demetit arva,
Troiuenum infesto prosternit corpora ferro.

See also Il. 11, 67 ff.; 19, 221 ff.; Aes. Sup. 637 ff. apol. Arg. 1380-90. There is a repetition of the 'third time' motif from the parodos:

This third time his wind of wrath has blown
Right on this people a mightier wave of war,
Three times more huge a ruin.

The following is a good example of the use Swinburne makes of Euripides' fragments.

Here never shall the Thracian plant on high
For ours his father's symbol, nor with wreaths
A strange folk wreath it upright set and crowned
Here where our natural people born behold
The golden Gorgon of the shield's defence
That screens their flowering olive, nor strange Gods
Be graced, and Pallas here have praise no more.

οὐδ' ἀντ' ἐλάας χρυσέας τε Γοργόνας
τρίαιναν ὀρθὴν στᾶσιν ἐν πόλοισ βαῖθοις
Εὐμόλπος οὐδὲ Θοῤῥξ ἀναστρέψει λεῶς
στεφάνοισι, Παλλὰς δ' οὐδαμοῦ τιμήσεται.

Through the rest of the speech appear reminiscences from the long speech of Praxithea, preserved in the fragments of the Meleager. The exit is motivated by the words:

Come, therefore, I will make thee fit for death, etc.

She charges the old men to pray for this land; hence the chorus.

SECOND STASIMON

The second episode is an amplification of the rape of Orithyia. It has been touched upon already by the chorus in the Parodos, and by Praxithea in the rhesis just before this stasimon. It serves to forecast the storm

of war that is coming upon Athens. This is brought out clearly towards the close of the stasimon by antithesis between the old woe and the new. Swinburne gets his outline and some coloring from Ovid, *Met.* 6, IX. There are fragments of a lost play of Sophocles on the subject.

Of this hoary-headed woe
Song made mention long ago.

There are fewer apparent reminiscences from Greek in this song than is usual with Swinburne. We see the conventional war chariots, the fawn by night on the hills belated, given over for a spoil unto the strong, which may be reminiscent of Horace, or of Aesch. fr. 32. The maiden's knees beneath her were loosened for fear, as sometimes happens in Homer; and the violet and olive come in for their share of praise. The ode closes with a reference to the new sorrow, which motivates the next episode, opened by the ultimatum of the herald of Eumolpus.

THIRD EPISODE

The speech of the herald is colored with the wit of Aristophanes, the irony of Aeschylus and the pathos of Homer. The "tongue-fighters, tough of talk and sinewy speech," recall the old Marathon fighters that Aristophanes mentions with pride not unmixed with humor. Homer likens such men to grasshoppers that sing their song in the sunshine. See *Il.* 3, 149 ff.

(Elders of the people, sat at the Scaean gates. They had now ceased from battle for old age, yet were they right good orators, like grasshoppers that in a forest sit upon a tree and utter their lily-like voice; even so sat the elders of the Trojans upon the tower.)

The tone of the herald is very scathing.

Old men, gray borderers on the march of death,
Tongue-fighters, tough of talk and sinewy speech,
Else nerveless, from no crew of such faint folk
Whose tongues are stouter than their hands come I
To bid not you to battle.

The remainder of the speech, although couched in the language of a challenge to single combat, is turned to express the enemy's contempt for the men of Athens. Such combats occur in the *Iliad*, and at the gates of Thebes. In Euripides, *Heraclea* 807 ff., Hyllus challenges the leader of the invading forces, who declines the honor. To reward such cowardice, the gods give him over to old Iolaus, who has long outlived his fighting days. The "keen-tongued wail" of these old men is transferred from the cry of the eagles in *Ag.* 56.

The reply of the chorus is just as sharp and more coherent. There is a decided Aeschylean bigness of phrase in the language, particularly

short space

May lessen thy large ignorance and inform
This insolence with knowledge if there live
Men earth-begotten of no tenderer thews
Than knit the great joints of the grim sea's brood
With hasps of steel together.

Then in stichomythia fly word-feathered shafts in Homeric style, to be checked by the entrance of Erechtheus. His greeting is full of Aeschylean pomp and shrill wind of speech.

The herald now repeats his ultimatum in terms of Poseidon the earth-shaker.

The stakes of war are set,
For land or sea to win by throw and wear;

just as in the Septem, 414:

ἔργον δ' ἐν κύβοις Ἀρης κριθεῖ.

or Horace, 0, 2, 1, 6.

Choose to yield

Or by that father's sceptre, and the foot
Whose tramp far off makes tremble for pure fear
Thy soul-struck mother, (Earth) piercing like a sword
The immortal womb that bare thee; by the waves
That no man bridles and that bound thy world,
And by the winds and storms of all the sea,
He swears to raze from eyeshot of the sun
This city named not of his father's name, etc.

Erechtheus accepts the gage:

To fight then be it; for if to die or live
No man but only a God knows this much yet
Seeing us fare forth, who bear but in our hands
The weapons not the fortunes of our fight;
For these now rest as lots that yet undrawn
Lie in the lap of the unknown hour;

This is a later amplification of Atalanta, 15 f.

But for the end, that lies unreached as yet
Between the hands and on the knees of gods;

a Homeric commonplace. Then follows another version of the freedom theme from Aes. Per. 241, already used in the parodos, 1. 138.

death nor life of mine
Shall give to death or lordship of strange kings
The soul of this live city, nor their heel
Bruise her dear brow discrowned, nor snaffle or goad
Wound her free mouth nor stain her sanguine side
Yet masterless of men.

For the "snaffle or goad" figure see *Aes. Per.* 185 ff., where Atossa dreams that she saw her son try to drive Hellas yoked to a chariot. "She was restive, and with her hands tried to tear in pieces the harness of the car, and then ran away with it by force, without the bit, and snapped the yoke in the middle. And my son was thrown out, and his father Darius stood pitying him." Continuing the metaphor he goes on:

so bid thy lord
Learn ere he weep to learn it, and too late

Gnash teeth that could not fasten on her flesh,
And foam his life out in dark froth of blood,

just as Clytemnestra says of Cassandra, *Ag.* 1065 ff:

She is mad or under the influence of an evil spirit,—as one who has arrived from a city just taken, and has not learned to bear the bit, before she foams away her fretfulness in blood.

Erechtheus is confident;

though his ranks
Were more to number than all wildwood leaves
The wind waves on the hills of all the world,
Yet should the heart not fail, the head not fall.

He takes in more territory than Horace; *O.* 1, 21, 6:

nemorum coma
Quaecumque aut gelido prominet Algidio
nigris aut Erymanthi
cilvis aut viridis Cragi.

Tell the king to make ready; I am coming. In this manner he gives the chorus its entrance. "I go this last high way to the end of all."

THIRD STASIMON

(Quis desiderio sit pudor aut modus
tam cari capitis?)

The chorus opens with a Greek rhythm that is rather unusual in English.

Who shall put a bridle in the mourner's lips to chasten them
Or seal up the fountains of his tears for shame?
Song nor prayer nor prophecy shall slacken tears nor hasten them,
Till grief be within him as a burnt-out flame.

— — — — —
| — — — — — | — — — — — | — — — — — | — — — — —

We find here 'the rain of eyes that weep'; while in Prometheus, 144 we see a cloud: also, "Death at last for all men is a harbor: Anthol. Pal; 7, 452

κοινὸς πᾶσι λιμὴν' Αἰδῆς

The elaboration is in the modern poetic vein.

Death at last for all men is a harbor; yet they flee from it
Set sails to the storm-wind and again to sea;
Yet for all their labor no whit further shall they be from it,
Nor longer but wearier shall their life's work be.
And with anguish of travail until night
Shall they steer into shipwreck out of sight,
And with oars that break and shrouds that strain
Shall they drive whence no ship steers again.

See, however, the great chorus of Soph. O. C. 1211 ff.

. the long days lay up full many things nearer unto grief than joy; but as for thy delights, their place shall know them no more, when a man's life hath lapsed beyond the fitting term; and the Deliverer comes at the last to all alike,—when the doom of Hades is suddenly revealed, without marriage-song or lyre,—or dance,—even Death at the last.—

* * * * * and as some cape that fronts the north is lashed on every side by the waves of winter, so he also is fiercely lashed evermore by the dread troubles that break on him like billows, some from the setting of the sun, some from the rising, some in the region of the noon-tide beam, some from the gloom-wrapped hills of the North.

The appeal to Zeus is in the Aeschylean manner:

King of kings, holiest of holies, and mightiest of might,
Lord of the lords of thine heaven that are humble in thy sight.

See also ATHENS, King of kings, holy of holies, blessed god

Ἀναξ ἀνάκτων, μακάρων μακάρτατε καὶ τελέων
τελειότατον κράτος, ὀλβιε Ζεῦ

Aes. Sup. 524

Swinburne is much milder in his expostulation with the gods than in the *Atalanta*. His 'therefore' at the close of the citation of the power of god, suggested the 'supreme evil' theme; but instead, we get a prayer: "Take off us thy burden, and give us not wholly to death." The next idea is Greek:

For lovely is life and the law wherein all things live,
And gracious the season of each, and the hour of its kind,
And precious the seed of his life in a wise man's mind.

cf. Soph. fr. 64

Then follows the sacrifice of the maiden, which I have already discussed. The chorus glorifies Athens and laments the maiden going to become the bride of death. This part of the chorus is very strongly reminiscent of the *Antigone*. There, 800 ff., the chorus can not refrain from tears at the sight of *Antigone* passing to the bridal chamber where all are laid at rest. Here the chorus laments

To behold thee, O child, of so bitter a birth
That we counted so sweet,

What way thy steps to what bride-feast tend
What gift he must give that shall wed thee for token
If the bridegroom be goodly to greet.

Chthonia and Antigone greet the chorus in the same manner, each calling attention to her wretchedness.

People, old men of my city, lordly wise and hoar of head,
I a spouseless bride and crownless but with garlands of the dead,
From the fruitful light turn silent to my dark unchilded bed.

So Antigone: 806 ff.

See me, citizens of my fatherland, setting forth on my last way,
looking my last on the sunlight that is for me no more; no, Hades who
gives sleep to all leads me living to Acheron's shore; who have had no
portion in the chant that brings the bride, nor hath any song been mine
for the crowning of bridals; whom the lord of the dark lake shall wed.

The chorus in reply, puns on her name, just as the chorus in the Agamemnon puns on the name of Helen.

Wise of word was he too truly, but with deadlier wisdom wise,
First who gave thee name from under earth, no breath from upper skies,
When foredoomed to this day's darkness, their first daylight filled thine
[eyes.

Ag. 681 ff.

Who was he the name conferred
True in deed and true in word,—
Was it one we do not see
Fate-inspired of what must be,
Ordering his tongue aright?
Spear-won bride of many a fight
Helen, in what seemly way
Ships, men, city, fall her prey.

In spite of the fact that Chthonia is attended by her mother, her isolation seems just as great as Antigone's. The next is an echo of Euripides, *Iph. Aul.* 1502 ff.

Day to day makes answer, first to last, and life to death; but I
Born for death's sake die for life's sake, if indeed this be to die,
This my doom that seals me deathless till the springs of time run dry.

Iph.

For a light unto Hellas thou fosteredst me,
And I die, O freely I die for thee.

Ch.

Yea, for thy glory shall never die.

Praxithea makes a double pun on the daughter's and father's name.

Dark the name, and dark the gifts they gave thee, child, in childbirth
[were
Sprung from him that rent the womb of earth (Erechtheus) a bitter seed
[to bear,
Born with groanings of the ground that gave him way to heaven's dear
[air.

The chorus consoles her by speaking of her future fame.

Children shalt thou bear to memory, that to man shall bring forth none;
Yea, the lordliest that lift eyes and hearts and songs to meet the sun,
Names to fire men's ears like music till the round world's race be run.

So of Alcestis the chorus sings. 445 ff.

For the seven-stringed shell or the paeon
Unharped, shall thy fame be a song,
When o'er Sparta the moon Carnean
High rideth the whole night long.
And in Athens the wealthy and splendid
Shall thy name on her bards' lips ring;
Such a theme hast thou left to be blended
With the lays that they sing.

See also Iph. Aul. 1398 f. where Iphigeneia says:

My body unto Hellas I resign.
Sacrifice me, raze ye Troy; for this through all the ages is
My memorial; children, marriage, glory—all are mine in this.

Praxithea closes the kommos by saying:

I thy mother, named of gods that wreak revenge and brand with blame,
Now for thy love shall be loved as thou, and famous with thy fame,
While this city's name on earth shall be for earth her mightiest name.

Cf. Iph. Aul. 1440 σέσωσμαι, κατ' ἐμὲ δ' εὐκλεῆς ἔσει.

FOURTH EPISODE

Chthonia's farewell to her mother is similar to Iphigeneia's speech in Eur. Iph. Aul. 1368-1401. Both are reconciled to the idea of death; in fact both rather glory in their fate. Euripides is more direct and reasonable. Swinburne cannot refrain from his habit of retrospection at childhood that is past, and of regret for children that were not to be born. There is a long passage in the *Atalanta* where the heroine talks in the same strain. Praxithea answers in a speech still longer, which becomes heavier and heavier with metaphor. She touches again upon the rape of Oreithyia, who was borne

Beyond the wild ways of the unwandered world
And loud wastes of the thunder-throated sea,
Springs of the night and openings of the heaven,
The old garden of the sun;

Cf. Soph. fr. Oreithyia:

ὑπὲρ τε κόντον κἀντ' ἐπ' ἔσχατα χθονὸς
νυκτός τε πηγὰς οὐρανοῦ τ' ἀναπτυχάς,
Φοίβου παλαιὸν κῆπον

The chorus speaks to Chthonia just as the chorus speaks to Antigone: and under similar conditions.

O woofullest of women, yet of all
Happiest, thy word be hallowed; in all time
Thy name shall blossom, and from strange new tongues

High things be spoken of thee; for such grace
 The gods have dealt to no man, that on none
 Have laid so heavy sorrow. From this day
 Live thou assured of godhead in thy blood
 And in thy fate no lowlier than a god
 In all good things and evil; such a name
 Shall be thy child this city's, and thine own
 Next hers that called it Athens. Go now forth
 Blest, and grace with thee to the doors of death.

Soph. Ant. 817 ff.

Glorious, therefore, and with praise, thou departest to the deep place of the dead; wasting sickness hath not smitten thee; thou hast not found the wages of the sword; no, mistress of thine own fate, and still alive, thou shalt pass to Hades, as no other of mortal kind hath past.

Chthonia's lyrical farewell to her country is much like that of Iphigeneia at Aulis, 1474 ff. She puts on the garlands of sacrifice, greets Artemis, her mother, Pelasgia, Mycenae, and closes with a farewell to the light:

Hail, light divine!
 Hail, day, in whose hands doth the World's Torch shine!
 In a strange new life must I dwell
 And a strange new lot must be mine.
 Farewell, dear light, farewell.

FOURTH STASIMON

The episode closes with Chthonia's last words: I go to my death. Her mother bade her farewell about sixty lines back, but whether she left the stage or has waited to accompany Chthonia, we do not know. The chorus, that has listened to many lines in glorification of love of native land, begins softly, quasi improvisando, to treat the same theme, love:

Many loves of many a mood and many a kind
 Fill the life of man and mould the secret mind;

After various modulations we come to the love of Mother Earth, and city chosen, and natural land, and hills and streams and heaven:

Fields aflower with winds and suns, woods with shadowing hair

(For which see Hor. O. 1, 21, 5; 4, 3, 10; 4, 7, 1; Catul. 4, 10; Il. 17, 677; Od. 23, 195; Soph. Ant. 419; Eur. Alces. 172)

Then we come to the generation theme, which Swinburne uses, or abuses, with so much enthusiasm.

No wind over sea blew us hither adrift on thy shore,
None sowed us by land in thy womb that conceived us and bore.
But the stroke of the shaft of the sunlight that brought us to birth
Pierced only and quickened thy furrows to bear us, O Earth.
With the beams of his love wast thou cloven as with iron or fire,
And the life in thee yearned for his life and grew great with desire.
And the hunger and thirst to be wounded and healed with his dart
Made fruitful the love in thy veins and the depths of thy heart.
And the showers out of heaven overflowing and liquid with love
Fulfilled with child of his godhead as rain from above.
Such desire had ye twain of each other, till molten in one
Ye might bear and beget of your bodies the fruits of the sun.
And the trees in their season brought forth and were kindled anew
By the warmth of the moisture of marriage, the child-bearing dew.
And the firstlings were fair of the wedlock of heaven and of earth;
All countries were hounteous with blossom and burgeon of birth,
Green pastures of grass for all cattle, and life-giving corn;
But here on thy bosom, here only, the man-child was born.

But Aeschylus used it before him. See Fr. Danaides.

Love throbs in holy heaven to wound the earth,
And love still prompts the land to yearn for bridals;
The rain that falls in rivers from the sky
Impregates earth, and she brings forth for man
The flocks and herds and life of teeming Ceres.
The bloom of forests by dews hymeneal
Is perfected; in all which things I rule.

So spoke Aphrodite.

The chorus closes with a note of admiration for the victim.

But her mouth was a fountain of song,
And her heart as a citadel strong,
That guards the heart of the city.

FIFTH EPISODE

The messenger enters and describes the sacrifice; the throng, the maiden, her offertory, the response of the god, the stroke of the knife, the pool of blood, the groans of the spectators and the silence of the queen. She

Groaned not nor spake nor wept, but as a dream
Floats out of eyes awakening, so past forth
Ghostlike, a shadow of sorrow, from all sight
To the inner court and chamber where she sits
Dumb, till word reach her of this whole day's end.

In Euripides' *Hecuba*, 521-582 occurs the sacrifice of Polyxena to the shade of Achilles. Talthybius tells the story of her death to Hecuba, who is summoned by Agamemnon to receive the corpse for burial. This is even more spectacular than Swinburne's. All the Achaeans throng to see the offering, where the son of Achilles is master of ceremonies. He poured drink offerings and prayed to the ghost of his father, after which he drew his sword and signaled to his assistants to seize the maid; but she, noticing this spoke thus:

O Argives, ye which laid our city low,
Free-willed I die; on my flesh let no man
Lay hand; unflinching will I yield my neck.
But by the gods, let me stand free, the while
Ye slay, that I may die free; for I shame
Slave to be called in Hades, who am royal.

Yea, like a great sea roared the host: the king
Spake to the youths to let the maiden go.
And they, soon as they heard that last behest
Of him of chiefest might, drew back their hands.
And she, when this she heard, her master's word,
Her vesture grasped, and from the shoulder's height
Rent it adown her side, down to the waist,
And bosom showed and breasts, as of a statue,
Most fair; and bowing to the earth her knee,
A word, of all words most heroic, spake.
Lo here O youth, if thou art fain to strike,
My breast, strike home; but if beneath my neck
Thou wouldest, here my throat is bared to thee.
And he, loth and yet fain, for ruth of her,
Cleaves with the steel the channels of her breath:
Forth gushed the life-springs, but she, even in death,
Took chiefest thought decorously to fall,
Hiding what hidden from men's eyes should be.
But when she had spent her breath 'neath that death-stroke,
Each Argive 'gan his task, no man the same. etc.

Swinburne has done what he would have ridiculed in the work of any one else; he has given the maiden too much hair. But he has succeeded in investing the picture with the requisite horror by drawing that ever-increasing pool of blood at the foot of the altar. Euripides, is, as he claims, statuesque; but he too spoils his effect by over-drawing the feminine touch when the princess is careful, even in death, to fall in a becoming posture. Swinburne at times approaches the sublimity of Aeschylus, who is seldom other than sublime: the bathos and characteristic gaucherie of Euripides all too frequently mar his efforts. We get two pictures in Swinburne; the foreword of the chorus, as it were, which is a reminiscence of the Agamemnon, and the sacrifice proper. Quite Aeschylean is:

They shall muffle her mouth that she cry not or curse them and cover
her eyes from the sword.

They shall fasten her lips as with bit and with bridle, and darken the
 light of her face,
 That the soul of the slayer may not falter, his heart be not molten, his
 hand give not grace.

In the actual sacrifice, however, these precautions are forgotten. In the Hecuba, also, Euripides makes the chorus look forward in foreboding to what is going to happen. Speaking to Hecuba, it sings:

For, except they turn and spare, and thy prevalence of prayer
 Redeem thee from bereavement of thy ruin-stricken child,
 Thou must surely live to gaze where a maiden on her face
 On a grave-mound lieth slaughtered, while the darkly-gleaming tide
 Welleth, wellet from the neck which the golden mockeries deck,
 And all her body crimsons in the bubbling horror dyed.

The chorus now sings to Praxithea, drawing a comparison between her unquestioning submission to the decrees of the gods, and her unselfish devotion to her country, and Niobe, who was once happiest of the daughters of the gods. The chorus has just heard from the messenger that the queen has past

To the inner court and chamber where she sits
 Dumb, till word reach her of this whole day's end.

Thereupon the chorus draws the comparison of one sitting in stone among the Lydian hills.

FIFTH STASIMON

More hapless born by far
 Beneath some wintrier star,
 One sits in stone among high Lydian snows,
 The tomb of her own woes;
 Yet happiest was once of the daughters of Gods and divine by her sire
 and her lord,

Ere her tongue was a shaft for the hearts of her sons, for the heart
of her husband a sword;
For she, too great of mind,
Grown through her good things blind,
With godless lips and fire of her own breath
Spake all her house to death;
But thou, no mother unmothered, nor kindled in spirit with pride of
thy seed,
Thou hast hallowed thy child for a blameless blood-offering, and ran-
somed thy race by thy deed.

For her family see Aes. fr. Niobe

οἱ θεῶν ἀγχίσποροι . . . κοῦπω νιν ἐξίτηλον αἶμα δαιμόνων

For the boastful tongue see Ant. 127

Ζεὺς γὰρ μεγάλης γλώσσης κόμπους ὑπερεχθαίρει

Hor. O. 4.6.1

Dive, quem proles Niobeae magnae
vindicem linguae, Titiosque raptor sensit.

Antigone compares her own fate with that of Niobe.
824 ff.

I have heard in other days how dread a doom befell our Phrygian guest,
the daughter of Tantalus, on the Siplyian heights; how like clinging ivy,
the growth of stone subdued her; and the rains fail not, as men tell,
from her wasting form, nor fails the snow, while beneath her weeping
lids the tears bedew her bosom; and most like to hers is the fate that
brings me to my rest.

Sophocles does not mention her fateful tongue, but
there is a reference to it in Ovid, Met. 6, 301, ff.

For the region, see also Il. 24, 614.

SIXTH EPISODE

The messenger, who has evidently remained on the scene during the singing of this short ode, reports now the rumor of the death of a threefold crown of maidens; fear shakes the city as the winds a wintering tree. In the *Argonautica* Jason and Medea stand like motionless trees until blown upon by the blast of Love. And essentially Greek is the idea that the blood

Shed of these maidens guiltless fall and fix
On this man's forehead like a curse that cleaves
To the unclean soul's inextinguishable head
Whom his own crime tracks hotter than a hound
To life's veiled end unsleeping.

So in *Aes. Eum.* 246 ff. the Erinyes say:

For as a hound tracks a wounded fawn, so do we track out by blood and its droppings. And with my long toils to wear out a man in the chase my heart pants; for every spot of earth has been carefully gone over, and across the sea with wingless flight have I come plying my course, etc.

With a reference to the battle that is imminent, the messenger ceases and the greatest chorus in the play begins.

SIXTH STASIMON

JOY OUT OF WOE

This chorus sets forth the battle fought in the terrified, foreboding mind, that still hopes for an escape from calamity; it is followed in the succeeding episode by the herald's account of the real contest. This is the second example of this device; the first being the third stasimon, in which the chorus forecasts, as it were, the sacrifice of the daughter of the king. It is one of the most magnificent

choruses that Swinburne ever wrote, and more nearly produces the effects he was constantly striving for; and it is about the most thoroughly Aeschylean of his efforts, at times fairly outdoing Aeschylus in sweep and majesty of phrase, and obscurity of thought.

We get a note of fear in the very first line,

Ill thoughts breed fear, and fear ill words; but these
The gods turn from us that have kept their law.

but there is a ring of fortitude and confidence in things human and divine that is not usual with Swinburne, whose manner in the face of suffering is usually defiant. The chorus is composed of singers, who in this instance seer-wise lift up their voices to recount the struggle of the forces of the gods jealous for the possession of Athens. The first chorus of the Septem begins with the same fear motif, but it is rather the terror of distracted women.

θρέομαι φοβερά μεγάλ' ἄχῃ.
μεθεῖται στρατός

They vacillate between exclamations of fright and supplication to the gods; but here we get a clear-eyed contemplation of the storm and stress of war. I know of nothing else that so fully realizes spiritual agony and victory. The classical reminiscences are many.

Let us lift up the strength of our hearts in song,
And our souls to the heights of the darkling day.

In Aes. Sup. 809, the chorus, driven by fear, does likewise:

ἴσζε δ' ὁμᾶν οὐρανίαν,
μέλη θεοῖσι λιτανά.

and it is a fear of as desperate fate as may befall the chorus of Erechtheus. In the latter chorus, too, the fear is

assuaged somewhat by patience, as in the case of the watchman of the Agamemnon, who on watch was inclined to sing or hum a tune, shredding into his hours the song to be an antidote for sleep. (Ag. 16 f.) Then follows a curious confusion of the metaphor of ship of state and ship of life. Aeschylus loved the sea, which was also Swinburne's lifelong passion. Both drew heavily on it for metaphors.

If the wind in our eyes blow blood for spray,
Be the spirit that breathes in us life more strong
Though the prow reel round and the helm point wrong,
And the sharp reefs whiten the shoreward way.
For the steersman time sits hidden astern
With dark hand plying the rudder of doom,
And the surf-smoke under it flies like fume
As the blast shears off and the oar-blades churn
The foam of our lives that to death return,
Blown back as they break to the gulfling gloom.

Sep. 109 f.

κῦμα περὶ πτόλιν δοχμολόφων γὰρ ἀνδρῶν
καχλάζει πνοαῖς "Αρεος ὀρόμενον.

There is the usual appeal to the gods:

O earth, O gods of the land, have ye heart now to see and to hear
What slays with terror mine eyesight and seals mine ear?

So in Septem, 101

προδώσεις, παγαίχθων "Αρης τὰν τεάν;
ὦ χρυσοπήληξ δαῖμον, ἔπιδ' ἐπιδε πτόλιν,

We get a good picture of the Homeric storm cloud in

As a storm-cloud swollen that comes up from the skirts of the sea,
By the wind for helmsman to shoreward ferried,
So black behind them the live storm serried
Shakes earth with the tramp of its foot and the terror to be.

II. 4, 275 ff.

(Even as when a goatherd from a place of outlook seeth a cloud coming across the deep before the blast of the west wind; and to him being afar off it seemeth ever blacker, even as pitch, as it goeth along the deep, and bringeth a great whirlwind, and he shuddereth to see it and driveth his flock beneath a cave; even in such wise moved the serried battalions of young men, the fosterlings of Zeus, by the side of the Aiantes into furious war, battalions dark of line, bristling with shields and spears.

Here follows an appeal to the north wind, the raptor of Oreithyia:

O strong north wind, the pilot of cloud and rain,
For the gift that we gave thee what gift hast thou given us again?
O god dark-winged, deep-throated, a terror to forth-faring ships by night,
What bride-song is this that is blown on the blast of thy breath?

In Ovid, Met. 6, 690 ff., Boreas says to Oreithyia:

vi tristia nubila pello,
vi freta concutio nodosaque robora verto
induroque nives et terras grandine pulso.

What bride song is this that is blown on the blast of thy breath?
A gift but of grief to thy kinsmen, a song but of death,
For the bride's folks weeping, and woe for her father, who finds thee
[against him in fight.

In the Agamemnon there is a similar play on two meanings of the word κῆδος. Wrath, accomplishing its end, sped to Ilion this marriage bond, a trouble indeed.

Ἰλίου δὲ κῆδος ὀρθώνυμον
τελεσσίφρων μῆνις ἤλασεν

Some of Swinburne's metaphors are very bold, and rather confusing.

Till their corpses have covered and clothed as with raiment the face of the sword-ploughed field.

Aechylus had described the sea fairly abloom with corpses.

ὀρώμεν ἀνθοῦν πέλαγος Αἰγαῖον νεκροῖς

Still the appeal is to Boreas, the son of Aurora:

O son of the rose-red morning, O god twin-born with the day,
O wind with the young sun waking, and winged for the same wide way,

Herodotus says Boreas helped the Athenians in the Persian wars by wrecking the ships of the enemy.

The battle is joined in earnest now:
For now not in word but in deed is the harvest of spears begun.

So spoke Prometheus after the last warning of Hermes.
Pro. 1080

And now comes the deed, no longer the word;
καὶ μὴν ἔργῳ κούκετι μύθῳ

Aristophanes speaks of the Spartan prisoners from Sphacteria as a harvest; Eq. 392.

κατ' ἀνὴρ ἔδοξεν εἶναι, τ' ἀλλότριον ἁμῶν θέρος.
νῦν δὲ τοὺς στάχους ἐκείνους, οὓς ἐκείθεν ἤγαγεν.

See also Il. 19, 221-4

Sounds are expressed in the classical way;

Air shudders with shrill spears crossing, and hurtling of wheels that roar.
Sept. 140

δοριτίνακτος αἰθήρ δ' ἐπμαίνεται.
Il. 13, 339 μάχῃ ἔφριξεν ἐγχείησιν
φάλαγγες σάκεσιν τε καὶ ἔγχεσι πεφρικυῖται

As the grinding of teeth in the jaws of a lion that foam as they gnash
Is the shriek of the axles that loosen, the shock of the poles that clash.

Sept. 53

σιδηρόφρων γὰρ θυμὸς ἀνδρεῖα φλέγων
ἔπνει, λείοντων ὥς Ἀρη δεδορκότων

Sept. 135

ὄτοβον ἀρμάτων ἀμφὶ πόλιν κλύω,
... ἔλακον ἀξόνων βριθομένων χνόαι.

Sept. 188

ὅτε σύριγγες ἔκλαξαν ἐλίτροχοι

The dense manes darken and glitter, the mouths of the mad steeds
[champ,
Their heads flash blind through the battle, and death's foot rings in
[their tramp.

Sept. 115

διὰ δέ τοι γενύων ἱππείων δετοὶ
κινύρονται φόνον χαλινοί.

At the sound of the sea's host charging that deafens the roar of the sky's

Sept. 85

βρέμει δ' ἀμαχέτου δίκαν ὕδατος ὀροτύπου

There is a fine touch from the Prometheus in

Earth groans from her great rent heart,
and the hollows of rocks are afraid,
And the mountains are moved and the valleys
as waves in a storm-wind swayed.

Pr. 434

βοῶ δὲ πόντιος κλύδων
ξυμπίτνων, στένει βυθός,
κελαινός"Αἰδος ὑποβρέμει μυχὸς γᾶς

The chorus closes with a prayer to the sun for light and grace. It is answered by the appearance of the Athenian herald. The trochaic rhythm is in strong contrast to the very fine anapests of the chorus.

SEVENTH EPISODE

Praxithea interrupts the kommos of the chorus and the herald. Her sentence structure is quite Greek:

Man, what thy mother bare thee born to say
 Speek; for no word yet wavering on thy lip
 Can wound me worse than thought forestalls or fear.

The herald begins his account of the battle.

I have no will to weave too fine or far,
 O queen, the web of sweet with bitter speech;
 Bright words with darkling;

Pindar, O. 6, 86 weaves for warriors the changes of his song;

The battle cry is reminiscent of the Persae, 401 ff.

one man's note

Tore its way like a trumpet: Charge, make end,
 Charge, halt not, strike; rend up their strength by the roots;
 Strike, break them, make your birthright's promise sure,
 Show your hearts hardier than the fenced land breeds,
 And souls breathed in you from no spirit of earth,
 Sons of the sea's waves;

And you might have heard the loud shout of many at once,—Sons of the Greeks, go, free your country, free your children, your wives, the temples of your fathers' gods, and the tombs of your ancestors. Now the contest is for them all.

The battle itself seems more like a contest between Hesiodic monsters or Miltonic angels; but Athens is saved and Praxithea is content. She prays for death.

SEVENTH STASIMON

THE GOLDEN CHALICE OF SONG

Here follows the song of doubt and foreboding, to be very sharply offset by the sudden intervention of Athena. The Pindaric note is dominant in the phraseology, but the mood is Aeschylean. The chalice of gold, the flower of song, the wine of song, the honey of song, are all Pindaric; see the famous beginning of the seventh Olympian, also Olym. 9, 48

Fr. 166,

Iliad, 10, 579

The antithesis between the city redeemed and the city polluted with blood is very strong; and because of this pollution, the Aeschylean misgiving throws its sombre pall over the chorus. The attitude is similar to that of the chorus in the Agamemnon, just after the return of the king. (988)

Now I learn with mine own eyes
Their return, eye-witness-wise;
Still my soul, self-taught from within, feels rise
The dirge not sung with the lyre that Erinys cries
All unable still to clasp
Hope's fond daring in my grasp.
Not in vain my hosom broods
Nor unfulfilled my heart's prophetic moods,
Heart that beats in eddies stilled
Only when each is fulfilled.
Pray I such things farther fall
Than my hope, unfashioned all.

The song sits close to the heart, a dark dream that will not be spurned away. And the reason is clear:

In the darkness of earth beneath, in the world without sun,
The shadows of past things reign;

And a cry goes up from the ghost of an ill deed done,
And a curse for a virgin slain.

Nothing is more Aeschylean than the mindful wrath, for sin done, that bides its time for the hour to strike, a fury against the transgressors, bringing after-vengeance on the deed. Not by sacrifice or libation will one soothe the stubborn rage for the sacrifice without fire, i. e., the sacrifice of the maiden. Swinburne is keeping close to his text now, and in it is not much of Euripides.

EXODOS

Then comes the *deus ex machina*; the intervention of Athena, quite Euripidean and wholly unsatisfying. The enforcement of a new term of life upon Praxithea, when her desolation is complete, makes the doom of Althaea seem thrice fortunate indeed. But she quickly takes courage and speaks up from 'a heart made whole,' and takes the proffered blessing. The language of Athena, is, of course very overwhelming:

Hear, men that mourn, and woman without mate,
Hearken, ye sick of soul with fear, and thou
Dumb-stricken for thy children; hear ye too,
Earth, and the glory of heaven, and winds of the air,
And the most holy heart of the deep sea,
Late wroth, now full of quiet; hear, thou sun,
Rolled round with the upper fire of rolling heaven,
And all the stars returning; hill and streams,
Springs and fresh fountains, day that seest these deeds,
Night that shall hide not;

It is difficult why she should enter here into the spirit of "reverent emulation" with Prometheus.

Cf. Pr. 88 ff.

ὦ δῖος αἰθήρ καὶ ταχύπτεροι πνοαί,
ποταμῶν τε πηγαί, ποντίων τε κυμάτων
ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα, παμμήτορ τε γῆ,
καὶ τὸν πανόπτην κύκλον ἡλίου καλῶ,

Althaea's reply suggests a metamorphosis.

never tear

Shall stain for shame nor groan untune the song
That as a bird shall spread and fold its wings
Here in thy praise forever; * * * there is no grief
Great as the joy to be made one in will
With him that is the heart and rule of life
And thee, God born of God; thy name is ours,
And thy large grace more great than our desire.

Almost better seems the lament of Hecuba:

Daughter, I know not on what ills to look,
So many throng me: if to this I turn,
That hindereth me: thence summoneth me again
Another grief, on-ushering ills on ills.
And now I cannot from my soul blot out
Thine agony, that I should wail it not.

The chorus is quick to note the change of mood; and forgetting the cry from the ghost of an ill deed done, it proceeds to convert the light from the pyres of the dead into the light of the dawn of a new day.

METRE

Much of Swinburne's fine rhythmical effect is due to his use of Greek metrical devices;—to his employment of Greek feet, and of Greek license in substitution and resolution. Space will permit but few examples. The Choriambus

Thāt it ĕndūres oūtrāge ānd dōlōroūs dāys
Nor light upon the land | whīthēr I gō

She reels as any reed *ūndēr thē wīnd*,
And cleaves *ūnlō thē groūnd* with staggering feet.

And thy mouth shuddering like a shot bird ~~~~

What shall atone, what heal me, what bring back
Strength to the foot, light to the face? What herb
Assuage me?

He takes Euripidean license in substitutions in the iambic line.

Strike, cease not, arrow on arrow and wound on wound.
The house is broken, is broken; it shall not stand.

There is Euripidean iteration in this line, as in

Drives wave on wave on wave to west

and

Drives day on day on day to doom

So Eur. Bacchae, 1064 f., where Dionysus bends the tree.

A soaring pine-shaft by the top he caught,
And dragged down—down—still down to the dark earth.

κατῆγεν, ῆγεν, ῆγεν εἰς μέγαν πέδον.

The following is quite Greek in its rhythm:

Who shall put a bridle in the mourner's lips to chasten them,
Or seal up the fountains of his tears for shame

~~~~~|~~~~~|~~~~~|~~~~~  
~~~|~~~~~|~~~~~|~~~~~

We meet also the rather unusual example of a word being used in the same verse in both emphatic and un-emphatic position:

Earth is the | covering to | hide *thēe*, the | garment of | *thēe*.

The Greeks and Romans have been criticised for just such contrasts in quantity. See Virgil, *Aen.* 2, 663:

gnatum ante ora pātris, pātrēm qui

Ovid, *Met.* 13, 607

volūcri mox vera volūcris

and Theoc. 6, 19

τὰ μὴ κᾶλὰ κᾶλὰ πέφανται

In the *Atalanta in Calydon* and the *Erechtheus*, Swinburne has drawn from the Greek drama in the following ways:

He has used two Greek plots of Euripides, the *Meleager* and the *Erechtheus*; he has introduced the original characters, in so far as they are known, and to re-create them he has borrowed all available material from the surviving fragments; and to augment the effect of these, he has added extracts and ideas borrowed from the entire field of Greek poetry.

His characters are physiologically Aeschylean, but psychologically Euripidean.

Structurally the plays are both Aeschylean.

From Homer he borrowed (a) myths, (b) the Review, (c) the battle scene, and his narrative style, material for which he found in Ovid and Apollodorus.

The classical reminiscences may be classified as follows:

CLOSE TRANSLATIONS;

Atalanta..... 68 lines

Erechtheus..... 41 “

GREEK PASSAGES USED AS THEMES FOR AMPLIFICATION

Atalanta..... 73 “

Erechtheus..... 47 “

LINEs THAT REVEAL IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER GREEK CONNOTATION

Atalanta..... 1623 “

Erechtheus..... 1419 “

Number of lines in *Atalanta*..... 2317 “

Number of lines in *Erechtheus*..... 1761 “

CLASSICAL SUBJECTS

The following subjects are among those treated with more or less elaboration in the two plays:

| | |
|---|--|
| Altar | Love |
| Animate nature | Law |
| Atmosphere | Luck |
| Até | Lightning |
| Athens | Lions |
| Battle scenes | Mind |
| Bridle | Metaphors |
| Babes | Memory of the dead |
| Characterizations | Memory for the dead |
| Cursing | Nightingales |
| Cup of heart, song, etc. | Navel of Earth |
| Catalogue, from Homer, Ovid,
Apollonius, Apollodorus, and
the fragments of Euripides' Me-
leager | Nemesis |
| Demeter | Omens |
| Death, regret for early | Opposition of Gods (Earth and
Ocean; Poseidon and Pallas) |
| Dreams | Pictures |
| Envy of god | Piling up of adjectives |
| Earth, Mother | Pain, physical and mental |
| Eros | Prayer |
| Fates | Plowshare |
| Festivals | Puns on names |
| Fire | Quotations |
| Fishes | Rhesis |
| Flower (Anthos) | Raiment, embroidery, veils, etc. |
| Future | Reaping, of life |
| Fear | Sacrifice, human |
| Geography | Spring |
| Gaming | Sentimentality |
| Ghosts | Serpents |
| Gods | Spinning |
| Goddesses | Sound |
| | Sea |
| | Ship of State |

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Gifts of gods | Ship of doom |
| Gifts of the Hours | Similes |
| Generation | Sleep eternal |
| Hysteria | Soothsaying |
| Hybris | Stars |
| Hades | Sophistication |
| Hair | Trumpet |
| Honey | Vegetation |
| Intellect | Violets |
| Irony | Wine |
| Insolence | Word, the |
| Joy of battle | Words, Greek, with unusual con- |
| Justice | notation |
| Litotes | |

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| Edward Thomas..... | Algernon Charles Swinburne |
| G. E. Woodberry | Swinburne |
| John Drinkwater..... | Swinburne |
| F. M. Cornford..... | Thucydides Mythistoricus |
| P. Masqueray..... | Euripide et ses idées |
| Decharme..... | Euripide et l'esprit de son théâtre |
| Nestle..... | Euripides |

The English version of passages from Euripides are with few exceptions from the translation of A. S. Way; that of Sophocles, from the edition of Jebb.

STRUCTURE

Atalanta in Calydon, built on the Greek model, may be divided as follows:

Prologue, ll. 1-64.

Parodos, ll. 65-120.

First Episode, ll. 121-313.

First Stasimon, ll. 314-361.

Second Episode, ll. 362-718.

Second Stasimon, ll. 719-866.

Third Episode, ll. 867-1037.

Third Stasimon, ll. 1038-1204.

Fourth Episode, ll. 1205-1373.

Fourth Stasimon, ll. 1374-1468.

Fifth Episode, ll. 1469-1808.

Fifth Stasimon, ll. 1809-1855.

Exodos, ll. 1856-2317.

The Exodos contains a Kommos, one of the finest in English, and as fine as any thing of the sort in the Greek drama.

(For an explanation of these terms see the Poetics of Aristotle, Ch. XII.)

SWINBURNE'S DEBT TO HOMER

Atalanta in Calydon belongs to the pre-Homeric period, to a time when heroes were very near the gods. It was the age of Heracles, Jason, Peleus, and the *young* Gerenian Nestor. Homer casually mentions the story of Meleager (Iliad 9, 529 ff.) as an example of the reward of the headstrong. The combat with the monster gives the play an epic cast. In it Swinburne finds opportunity to draw from Homer in more ways than one. He is in fact in the same position as Apollonius of Rhodes, who although

he set his story in a period antedating the Homeric, was wholly dependent on Homer for material and method of treatment. Swinburne draws from Homer in his setting, his characters, which are more heroic than those generally found in Greek tragedy, in incidents such as the review, in many reminiscences, several direct references, and numerous quotations. The following references will show in part Swinburne's debt to Greek Epic.

Atalanta in Calydon, 1.

- 8 Mortal with gentler shafts, Od. 11, 172.
- 16 Knees of gods, Il. 17, 514.
- 26 Earth laughs, Il. 19, 362; H. Dem. 14.
- 45 Wind-footed, Il. 8, 409; H. Aph. 217.
- 51 Full-flowered, Od. 14, 353.
- 64 Spring, H. Dem. 54.
- 70 Lady of light, H. 27, 4.
- 78 Sandals, Il. 2, 44 et freq.
- 104 Nymphs, H. Pan, 2, 19; H. Dion. 26.
- 162 Sacrifice—for the story see Il. 9, 534 ff.
- 166 Rural atmosphere, H. Hermes.
- 201 Vain talk, Od. 18, 331.
- 362 ff. The review, cf. Il. 3, 161 ff.
- 434 Hard-hearted, Il. 3, 60.
- 436 Vine-chapleted, etc. Il. 23, 316; H. 25.
- 510 Blessed Isles, Od. 4, 563.
- 564 Green life, H. Merc. 375.
- 659 Supplication, Il. 1, 500, 22, 338; 24, 478.
- 703 Windy words, Il. 4, 355.
- 674 For the mental attitude see Il. 1, 167.
- 688 Golden hair, Il. 1, 197; Od. 15, 133.
- 759 Articulate speech, Il. 1, 225 and sch.
- 855 Tyro. For the story see Od. 11, 235 ff.
- 1209 Came clashes of swift hoofs, Il. 24, 323.
- 1235 ff. List of huntsmen, see the Homeric catalogue.
- 1242 ff. Picture of Atalanta; see Od. 6, 102 ff.
- 1280 Spear . . . shook and stood fast, Il. 21, 69.

- 1287 Arrow, Il. 4, 125.
 1290 See boar similes in Il. 414 ff.; 12, 145 ff.
 1297 And violent sleep, etc. Il. 16, 250; 20, 477; 21, 181.
 1304 Sharp rang, etc. Il. 4, 504.
 1310 The boar, wounded by Amphiaraus, cries like Aros, wounded in battle before Troy, Il. 5, 860.
 2042 Atalanta's wish is like that of Helen, Il. 6, 345. Cf. Tennyson, in "Dream of Fair Women."
 2202 Farewell, Od. 11, 488.

REMINISCENCES FROM THE GREEK DRAMATISTS

AESCHYLUS

The theme of the play is given in Aesch. Choe. 602-612.

- 1 Fr. 388.
 5 A light for dead men. Sept. 620 ff.
 10 Favorable and fair, Ag. 143; Sup. 149.
 14 Edge of spears, Eum. 766.
 17 O fair-faced sun, Ag. 508.
 25 Let earth laugh and the sea, Pro. 90.
 28 Foam, Eum. 183;
 34 Fountain heads, Pro. 89.
 60 Shorn locks, Choe. 180; 229.
 68 Nightingale, Ag. 1142.
 106 Fleet-foot kid, Eum. 111; fr. 382.
 105-8 fr. 168.
 119 Fr. 39.
 148 Retribution, Pro. 8.
 170 Sacrifice neglected, Fr. 161.
 177 Justice, Eum. 702; Sup. 814; Choe. 671.
 201 Witless, Pro. 385.
 208 ff. Love the destroyer, Ag. 743; Choe. 600.
 222 Weeping, Choe. 81; Ag. 889.
 228 Per. 539.
 261 Picture of warrior. Sept. 380 ff.
 300 Like Themis in Pro.
 370 Sept. 543.

- 421 Ag. 725.
- 436 Sept. 435.
- 460 Change, Pro. 310.
- 466 ff. Integer vitae, Eum. 490; Pro. 536.
- 564 Green youth, Sup. 663.
- 665 ff. Mother love, Choe. 749-60.
- 715 Sup. 1049.
- 889 Sup. 1030.
- 1043 Pro. 310 ff.
- 1153 Ag. 369.
- 1175 Prometheus to Zeus, in Euripidean manner; Ag. 146; 383.
- 1205 ff. Flowers at the altar, Ag. 86.
- 1208 Pro. 533.
- 1893 That is my son, Ag. 1404.
- 2043 Pro. 135.
- 2046 Per. 362.
- 2054 Spear shaft broken, Ag. 65.
- 2075 Choe. 345.
- 2136 Choe. 345.
- 2215 Sowing Sept. 753. Cf. Shak. Ant. and Cleo. 2, 2.
- 2229 Per. 840.

REMINISCENCES FROM SOPHOCLES

- 1 Elec. 626.
- 17 Fair-faced sun, Trach. 94.
- 38 Virgin Artemis, Elec. 1238.
- 50 Aetolian land, Elec. 704.
- 52 Won from the river, Trach. 9 ff.
- 59 Hair, Ajax 1174 and Jebb's note.
- 72 Artemis, O. R. 206.
- 104 Pan, Bacchus, Maenads, Or. R. 211; 1100; Ant. 1153.
- 112 Bacchanal, O. C. 674; Trach. 218.
- 166 Flocks, crops, Fr. 4626, 1.
- 208 Love, Ant. 787.
- 353 Ajax, 1203.
- 466 ff. Child vs. parent, Ant. 639.
- 721 Relentless time, O. R. 341.
- 929 Ant. 1087.

- 930 Just as Jocasta stops the wrangling of Oedipus and Creon.
 1200 Ajax, 125 ff.
 1208 Silence, Ant. 1347 ff.
 1374 ff. For the general idea of this chorus see O. C. 668 ff.
 1469 Brothers, Ant. 668.
 1809-55 Love the destroyer, Ant. 944 ff.
 2031 The flesh of my body is molten, Trach. 1055.
 2122 Bear me away, Trach. 953.
 2215 Sowing, O. T. 1497; 1211; 1257.

REMINISCENCES FROM EURIPIDES

Theme of play from the fragment of the Meleager,
 20 (537).

*"Treat well the living; every man, when dead
 Is dust and shadow, naught to nothing fled."*

- 17 Herac. 748.
 38 Ion 466.
 122 Pure lips, Cyc. 558.
 148 Patient of the gods, Hel. 252; Fr. 1076.
 161 Small praise, Iph. Tau. 386.
 166 Grain, Fr. Hyps. 458.
 208 Love, Med. 320; Tro. 982.
 210 Med. 330.
 216 Med. 900.
 222 Hip. 375.
 261 Picture, Rhe. 305.
 380 Fr. Meleager.
 395 Leda, Fr. Meleager.
 429 Telamon, Fr. Meleager.
 436 Ancaeus, Fr. Meleager, 534, 5.
 444 Fr. Meleager, 534, 7.
 592 Elec. 432.
 624 Medea 928.
 682 Medea 920.
 709 Erech. Fr. 370.
 737 Fr. 433.
 810 Hecuba.
 838 Omnipresent love, Hip. 449; 1272.

- 929 Woman playing the man's part, Fr. Meleager.
930 Iph. Aul. 380.
942 Med. 366.
1010 Hysteria, Bacchae.
1080 Euripides sent them.
1115 Against the gods, Hip. 1415.
1374 Peace, Hip. 208; Bacch. 71, 106.
1145 Med. 1020.
1210 Bacch. 178.
1246 Bacch. 621.
1516 Alces. 147; Iph. Aul. 441.
1734 Med. 1013.
1781 Med. 1013.
1806 Bacch. 590.
1830 Heracl. 608.
1945 Med. 1021; Phoen. 1429.
2004 Med. 1206.
2005 Alces. 141.
2009 Alces. 141.
2027 Hip. 1350.
2037 Hip. 1391.
2117 Med. 134.
2182 Hip. 1378.
2188 Hip. 1364.
2202 Salute me, Fr. 537; 536.

REMINISCENCES FROM PINDAR

- 35 Achelous, Fr. 249 (153).
46 Wind-footed, N. 1. 6.
47 Well wooded, O. 8. 9.
51 Full flowered, O. 13, 17.
88-95 Spring, Fr. 75 (45) P. 4, 114.
112 O. 2, 30.
115 Bright breast, P. 4, 8.
119 Wolf, P. 2, 84.
124 Honey, P. 9, 63.
161 Praise, O. 9, 56: 1, 52.
443 Unsandaled, P. 4, 96.

132 *Swinburne's Atalanta in Calydon and Erechtheus*

466 ff. Blessed Isles, O. 2, 61-85; Dirges, fr. 129, 130 (95); 131 (96).
137 (102).

564 Flower of life, P. 4, 158.

688 Yellow hair, P. 2, 16.

1424 Hid the limbs of Iamos, O. 6, 84.

REMINISCENCES FROM ARISTOPHANES

68 Nightingale, Av. 676; 212.

104 Pan, Av. 1098.

REMINISCENCES FROM OTHER GREEK
WRITERS

HESIOD

727 ff. Theog. 211 ff.

1065 Pandora.

1070 Works, 90.

MOSCHUS

2110 320.

SAPPHO

1391 Pale as grass or latter flowers, 2, 14.

CALLIMACHUS

45 Art. 215.

THEOGNIS

26 Earth laughs, 9.

320 Pandora, 500.

REMINISCENCES FROM LATIN WRITERS

OVID

4 Diva triformis, Met. 7, 94.

Ovid contains the whole story of the Calydonian boar.
See Met. 6, 424 ff.

HORACE

4 Diva triformis, O. 3, 22, 4.

65 Hounds of spring, O. 4, 7, 9. Ver proterit aestas.

- 67 Lisp of leaves, O. L, 23, 5 Nam seu mobilibus vepris inhorruit
ad ventum foliis.
68 Brown bright Nightingale, O. 4, 12, 5.
98 Grass, Ep. 2, 22.
108 O. 1, 9, 18.
170 Sacrifice, O. 3, 23, 20.
594 Hewn pine, O. 1, 14, 11.

LUCRETIVS

- 128 Seasons, 5, 737.
719 ff. 4, 1040 to end.
752 1, 1-8.
758 Love, 1, 10 ff.
2215 Sowing, 4, 1272.

TIBVLLVS

- 170 3, 4, 10.

CATVLLVS

- 721 Nobis, cum semel occidit lux.

ERECHTHEVS

A TRAGEDY

STRUCTURE

| | | |
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| 1 | Prologue..... | 1- 94 |
| 2 | Parodos..... | 95- 238 |
| 3 | First Episode..... | 239- 348 |
| 4 | First Stasimon..... | 349- 360 |
| 5 | Second Episode..... | 361- 554 |
| 6 | Second Stasimon..... | 555- 640 |
| 7 | Third Episode..... | 641- 753 |
| 8 | Third Stasimon..... | 754- 889 |
| 9 | Fourth Episode..... | 890-1074 |
| 10 | Fourth Stasimon..... | 1075-1190 |
| 11 | Fifth Episode..... | 1191-1240 |
| 12 | Fifth Stasimon..... | 1241-1251 |
| 13 | Sixth Episode..... | 1253-1282 |
| 14 | Sixth Stasimon..... | 1283-1483 |
| 15 | Seventh Episode..... | 1484-1623 |
| 16 | Seventh Stasimon..... | 1624-1643 |
| 17 | Exodos..... | 1644-1760 |

CLASSICAL REMINISCENCES IN THE ERECHTHEUS

FROM HOMER

- 7 Hymn to Aphrodite, 317; Il. 14, 239; Il. 1, 511; 21, 33.
- 10 Il. 2, 586 ff. 4, 478; H. Cer. 168.
- 21 Il. 1, 64.
- 38 Od. 15, 480.
- 113 Il. 4, 248.
- 114 Homeric οἶνοπι πόντῳ
- 384 Il. 1, 225; 3, 180.
- 396 Od. 4, 399.
- 473 Il. 15, 27; 15, 34.
- 475 Il. 11, 67 ff.; Il. 19, 221 ff.
- 646 Il. 3, 151.
- 679 Il. 1, 201.
- 711 ff. Another version of Atalanta 16.
- 1149 Il. 17, 677; Od. 23, 195.
- 1248 ff. Il. 24, 614.
- 1312 ff. Il. 4, 275 ff.
- 1340 Il. 19, 221 ff.
- 1349 Il. 13, 399.
- 1626 Il. 10, 679.

CLASSICAL REMINISCENCES FROM THE GREEK TRAGEDIANS

AESCHYLUS

- 1 Pro. 90.
- 7 Sept. 477.
- 13 ff. Pro. 462 ff.; Sept. 393.
- 29 Eum. 190.
- 30 Pro. 91.
- 38 Per. 576.
- 44 Sept. 64, 1077.
- 52 ff. Pro. 89 ff.; Ag. 681 ff.
- 57 Cf. 174; Ag. 151, 207 ff.
- 138 Per. 241.
- 159 Eum. 166.

- 312 Ag. 192.
 335 ff. Bright god's (Phoibos)—speaks askance and darkling (Loxias)
 but his name hath in it slaying and ruin (Apollo) Ag. 1080.
 365 Ag. 1178; Per. 159.
 384 Per. 206.
 475 ff. Sup. 637.
 479 Pro. 1015.
 646 Ag. 56.
 693 Sept. 414.
 725 ff. Ag. 1065 ff.
 778 f. Sup. 524 ff. Cf. Athens "King of kings, holy of holies, blessed
 god."
 818 ff. Ag. 227 ff.
 866 For similar pun see Ag. 681 ff.
 1164 f. Fr. Danaides, 38 ὄμβρος δ' ἀπ' εὐνάεντος οὐρανοῦ πεσὼν ἔκυσε
 γαῖαν.
 1168 Fr. Danaides, δεινδρῶτις ὥρα δ' ἐκ νοτιζοντος γάμου τελειός ἐστι.
 1225 ff. Ag. 239 ff.
 1242 ff. Er. Niobe 157 οἱ θεῶν ἀγχισποροι, κ. τ. λ.
 1274 ff. Eum. 246 f.
 1284 f. Sept. 78.
 1286 f. Sup. 809; Ag. 16 f.
 1288 ff. Sept. 109 ff.
 1304 f. Sept. 101.
 1311 Sept. 140.
 1324 ff. For similar word play see Ag. 699.
 1333 Ag. 659.
 349 Sept. 140.
 1350 f. Sept. 53, 135, 188.
 1357 Sept. 85.
 1461 Ag. 1390 ff.
 1518-30 Per. 401-7.
 1641 ff. Ag. 100, 214, 224, 236.
 1647 ff. Pro. 88 ff.
 1720 Per. 242.

FROM SOPHOCLES

- 13 Antig. 477.
 25 Antig. 122. Cf. Tennyson, Oenone.
 "Troas, and Ilium's columned citadel,
 The crown of Troas."

Swinburne uses the same figure in 82 and 125.

- 30 f. Antig. 1065.
 146 O. C. 701.
 350 Elec. 1078. Cf. Atalanta 357.
 863 Antig. 806; Ajax, 857.
 981-4 Fr. Oreithuia ὑπέρ τε πόντον. κ. τ. λ.
 1075 ff. The chorus addresses Antigone in the same manner. Antig.
 817 ff.
 1149 Antig. 419.
 1242 ff. Antig. 824 ff.
 1750 Antig. 834.

FROM EURIPIDES

- 12 Bacch. 133.
 497-503 Fr. Erechtheus 46 οὐδ' ἀντ' ἐλάας. κ. τ. λ.
 518-30 Fr. Erechtheus 32 καὶ μὴν θανόντες. κ. τ. λ.
 869 Iph. Aul. 1276 ff.
 881 ff. Iph. Aul. 1502.
 884 ff. Iph. Aul. 1397 ff.
 887 ff. Iph. Aul. 1440.
 1149 Alces. 172.
 1212 ff. Iph. Aul. 1552 ff.

FROM PINDAR

- 12 Nem. 6, 45.
 16 Pyth. 10, 65.
 25 Ol. 8, 32.
 125 Fr. 47; Fr. 75, 7; 75, 18.
 146 Ol. 3, 13.
 159 Nem. 7, 33.
 165 Ol. 7, 36; Fr. 34, 9.
 1461 Nem. 378.
 1488 Ol. 6, 86; Nem. 4, 94.
 1624 Ol. 7, 1 ff.; 9, 43.
 1626 Fr. 166.
 1627 Pyth. 4, 193.
 1641 ff. Fr. 120; Ol. 9, 33.

FROM ARISTOPHANES

- 125 Equit. 1329; Achar. 636 f.
 641 f. Achar. 181.

FROM APOLLONIUS OF RHODES

1254 Arg. 3, 966 ff.

FROM OVID

111 Met. 1, 22.

199 For the story see Met. 6, 683 ff.

215 For the story see Met. 6, 661 ff.

618 ff. Met. 6, 683-710.

1242 ff. Met. 6, 301 ff.

1322 Met. 6, 690 f.

FROM HORACE

38 O. 1, 2, 7.

111 ff. O. 1, 3, 21.

475 ff. O. 4, 14, 31.

693 f. O. 2, 1, 6.

736 ff. O. 1, 21, 6 ff.

754 O. 1, 24, 1 f.

1149 O. 1, 21, 5; 4, 3, 10; 4, 7, 1.

1242 ff. O. 4, 6, 1.

FROM CATULLUS

475 ff. 63, 354 ff.

1149 4, 10.

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Swinburne's Atalanta in Calydon and Erec



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o/in

